

Redevelopment of Hatfield Police Station

01st July 2008



Vincent & Gorbng, Chartered Architects and Town Planners, have announced the completion of Hatfield's new £18M state-of-the-art Police Station based at Hatfield Business Park. The stunning building reveals the imaginatively restored Grade II listed De Haviland buildings (the last remaining buildings of the 1930s Hatfield Aerodrome) uniquely linked with contemporary new buildings.

Client

Hertfordshire Police Authority

Lead Designer & Planning Consultant

Vincent & Gorbng – Architect

Structural & Civil Engineer

Baynham Meikle Partnership

Client Services Consultant

National Design Consultancy

Contractor

Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd

Employer's Agent

Goodman International Limited

Cost Consultant & CDM Co-ordinator

Currie & Brown

Building Control

Approved Design Consultancy

Landscape Consultant

Macgregor Smith

Project Acoustic Consultant

Eqqus Partnership

The scheme comprises:

- ▶ a new 3100m² base Command Unit Area Headquarters (Type 1)
- ▶ Police Station with Public Enquiry Office and road policing (Type 2) (c1600m²)
- ▶ a 30 cell Detainee Area and a Criminal Justice Unit (c 2200m²)
- ▶ a new Remand Court with 10 cell Detainee Area and ancillary accommodation
- ▶ provision of approximately 350 car parking spaces for visitor, staff and operational car parking.

Vincent and Gorbng secured the Hatfield Police Station and Custody Suite project following a limited architectural competition by the client, Hertfordshire Constabulary. The practice

was appointed in March 2005 to act as Architects and Lead Consultants for this highly prestigious project. Completed within 15 months, the scheme will officially open in July '08.

The main principles of the design involved fully utilising the existing listed buildings as part of the overall development requirements, being fully restored and sensitively adapted to conform to modern day standards and requirements of the Planning and Conservation Officers. A new focused entrance and link area has been provided between the two listed buildings (the administration and canteen buildings) and the new T-shaped Detainee Area and Police Station accommodation at the rear

of the site. A contemporary building reflects the status of the building as a key 'public building' and complements the existing listed buildings in scale.

Other related design considerations involved meeting the space standards and requirements set out in the Constabulary's Public Access and Visibility Strategy as well as aiming at a very good BREEAM rating and incorporating passive ventilation. Construction and design also had to facilitate low maintenance and operational costs.

Sustainable and environmental aspects are reflected in both the existing and new building form: Scientists from the BP Institute working with Cambridge University were appointed to advise on the use of passive ventilation in the project, particularly, for the listed buildings.

Rationalisation of the security aspects of the site with the surrounding land users was a key design principle as was the provision of a simple and effective traffic flow within the site, clearly illustrating the public, private and secure areas of operation. There is separate access to the front of the building for visitor parking in front of the main entrance and reception area and staff car parking in the north car park. Separate access is also provided to the secure parking area, detainee alighting van dock areas and ancillary accommodation associated with the Detainee Areas - all enclosed by a secure perimeter fence.

Due to the sensitive nature of the project, the detainee layout and design standards were developed in conjunction with Hertfordshire Constabulary, the Home Office

Guidance and through the Constabulary's Custody Practitioner's Consultation Group.

The removal of the poor quality landscaping, restoration of mature trees and the reinstatement of an extensive area of grassland enable the new design to benefit from a mature landscape foreground as originally conceived. The strong symmetrical axis to the building is continued outside the main entrance with a long feature pond and stone detailing offering an elegant and pleasing approach to the administration building.

The design of the Custody Suite incorporates a Central Control and Charge Desk with natural light and direct vision to cell corridors, interview and consultant rooms and to all other related activity rooms. There is direct access from Secured Detainees' alighting area to the Charge Desk and Holding Area. Integral parts of the design are the red, amber and green security zones, the straight corridors with no dead-end situations and all cells enjoying natural daylight and access to an exercise yard. There is separate public access off the green zone with direct access to public related areas from main entrance and reception area.

The Custody Suite incorporates the Criminal Justice Unit on one floor level, at first floor level.

The Type 1 and 2 Police Stations have been incorporated primarily in the listed buildings. In order to retain the integrity of the listed buildings and, in particular, the administration building, the existing central corridor has been retained and a large proportion of the partitions have also been retained where appropriate.

A new central entrance and reception area has been used as a transition element between the two listed buildings.

The new Remand Court has been located in the link building at first floor and allows for separate access from the Court detainees alighting area to a separate counter area and to the holding cells. Separate access is provided from the holding cells to the Court on first floor level and separate independent public access from the front of the building to the public waiting area to all the other ancillary accommodation.

The overall scheme boasts a contemporary piece of architecture which contrasts with the existing 1930s art deco buildings. Taking advantage of the open space between the existing listed buildings, Vincent & Gorbings have creatively designed a unique link that provides the new main entrance to the Police Station. The architectural concept emanated from the existing barrel vaulted canteen ballroom space as the new Custody Building. The sweeping curved roof encompassing the custody building, gives way to the rhythm of structural supports which provide framing for the brise soleil and a device for masking the alighting area (delivery point) for custody and the Remand Court.

The fuselage shaped building at the rear of the site runs parallel to the art deco buildings and a wedge shaped building which passes between the listed buildings ties together the old and new architecture.

In order to establish a meaningful distinction between the new and old architecture, it was important to accurately restore the existing listed

buildings as carefully as possible. Vincent & Gorbings therefore embarked on a sensitive restoration programme for the buildings in close liaison with the Conservation Officer and the Local Authority's Planning Officer and set about architecturally preserving the art deco buildings. Despite the constraints of fitting a modern functioning Police Station within an old building, the architects were able to successfully accommodate the client's requirements without externally modifying the original architecture.

Mark Chandler, Architect and Director of Vincent & Gorbings said:

"The listed buildings on the site are two fine examples of period architecture. Although unoccupied and neglected for many years, neglect that has resulted in deterioration of interior features due to water ingress and weathering, the principal structure of the building remained intact. The robust form of construction of the De Havilland buildings formed the basis of the new architectural project to sensitively restore these fine art deco examples and integrate them with a contemporary piece of architecture."

Mr Chandler continued:

"I would like to thank the client team, the main contractor Willmott Dixon, the Local Authority's Planning Officer, the Conservation Officer, The Home Office Design Review (formerly CABE) and the teams of advisors for their significant contributions towards this project.

This collaboration and the combined skills of the project team have enabled the most meaningful exercise in sustainability, namely the restoration of an old building redesigned for contemporary application, to be achieved."

Ian Potter, Head of Estates and Facilities, Hertfordshire Constabulary, commented:

"We are delighted with the new facility. This project has posed a number of architectural opportunities and challenges for Vincent & Gorbings such as working with an existing listed building, restrictions on permitted floor area within the new development and the sensitive nature of the activities undertaken at the facility. The architects undertook extensive consultation on this project and have worked closely with representatives of Estates and Facilities, The Home Office Design Review, The Home Office, the Public Access and Visibility Strategy (PAVS) group, the Project Board, the Police Authority and the end user. This helped refine proposals into an overall scheme which embodies the briefing requirements in their entirety." ↴

Mark Chandler of Vincent & Gorbings has just been awarded 'The Geoffrey De Havilland Trophy' for the design of the refurbishment and extension of the De Havilland buildings.

The trophy, which is presented each year to an individual or organisation for 'The Spirit of Enterprise', was awarded by the De Havilland Moth Club.

Vincent & Gorbings have also been responsible for the design of the new £13M Stevenage Police Station.

Vincent & Gorbings provide architecture, interior design, town planning and urban design services to private and public sector clients throughout the UK.

The practice operates within the commercial, industrial, leisure, retail, interior, housing and town planning sectors. Its client portfolio includes county and district councils, police and fire services, developers, private companies and PLCs, national housebuilders, housing associations and private individuals.