

Project Profile :: Public Buildings

New Library, Thame Cowley Records Office, Oxford

Client: Oxfordshire County Council

Architect: Oxford Architects

Scott White and Hookins' Role:

 Structural Engineering

 Civil Engineering

Two projects undertaken as part of our existing Framework Agreement with Oxfordshire County Council, involving working in or around existing buildings include a new Library at Thame and a Records office at Cowley Oxford.



At the County Records office in Cowley, Oxford the existing building is used to house the County Records and is open to the general public. Accommodation within the existing building envelope was required to extend the facilities provided.

Many options were considered by the Multi disciplinary Framework design team all of which were costed by the Quantity Surveyor and market tested by a Contractor. This was carried out in a collaborative way with all parties working closely with the client and end user to maximise the potential available within a very tight budget.

Extension of the archive storage space into existing office areas was found to be possible after consultation with archive drawings of previous works together with I investigations and assessments of the existing building structure. A new ceiling supported on a structural sub-frame over the existing office space was designed to provide four hour fire protection to the new archive space to meet statutory requirements. Provision of a new mezzanine structure to replace the office space was also included supported off the existing structure.

The new Thame Library, is a two storey building situated in the centre of the town. The main structure consists of a steel frame that incorporates both sway and braced frame principles. Three rigid jointed steel frames provide stability across the width of the building with cross bracing providing stability in the longitudinal direction.

Due to site boundary constraints, balanced foundations supporting the main steel frame elements span the width of the building to form the building's main substructure together with a number of pad footings and strip foundations in locations where the loads and site boundary permit.



There were a number of challenges structurally due very much to its tight town centre location, being surrounded on three sides by old existing buildings and at the front by the public pavement. Much careful consideration had to be given to Health and Safety, access, sequence of operations, crange and retaining support of neighbouring buildings both temporarily and permanently.

