

University of Brighton, Aldrich Library

project	Aldrich Library
location	Brighton, East Sussex
client	University of Brighton
dates	1994-1996
cost	£3.5million (plus £0.5million furnishings)
area	4,853 m ²



This commission was won in a design competition. The Aldrich Library is now seen as the flagship building of the Mousecoombe campus (it can be seen on the front page of the University website).

The form of the building responds equally to the pressures of the site and the organisation of the library. It acts as a 'marker', to highlight the corner of the campus, and achieves its architectural significance not through its size (because it is less overbearing than its 1960's neighbour) but through the animation of its form.

Inside, the readers are located next to north and east facing windows, while the southern and western sun is excluded by the masonry walls that enclose the book stacks. The building is ventilated naturally as air comes in through a purpose designed light shelf which also sound-attenuates traffic noise from adjacent roads.

Variations in the visual environment are created with a carefully designed system of artificial lighting, and natural materials are used as much as possible. The result is an economical building which reproduces the feel of a large-budget commission.

The project also involved a partial renovation the 60's building to which the library is attached, and includes a bookshop, refectory and cafe.

