

Ruskin Library, Lancaster University

'I give the Ruskin Library three stars without hesitation.' Edward Cullinan

Our building for Lancaster University houses the Whitehouse Collection of works of art and writings by John Ruskin.

Set at the entrance to the University campus, the library is a symbolic gateway to the University. It forms an escarpment at the west boundary of the University, and offers a dramatic view towards the sea.

The building accommodates archive storage (known as the "treasury"), together

with a reading room, curatorial offices and public gallery spaces. A double height entrance gives access to the gallery spaces, which are connected through the treasury by a glass bridge.

Metaphor and allusion were used in the planning and detail design, with the sequence of spaces being deliberately church-like; the entrance, treasury and reading room respectively represent the narthex, choir and sanctuary of a church.

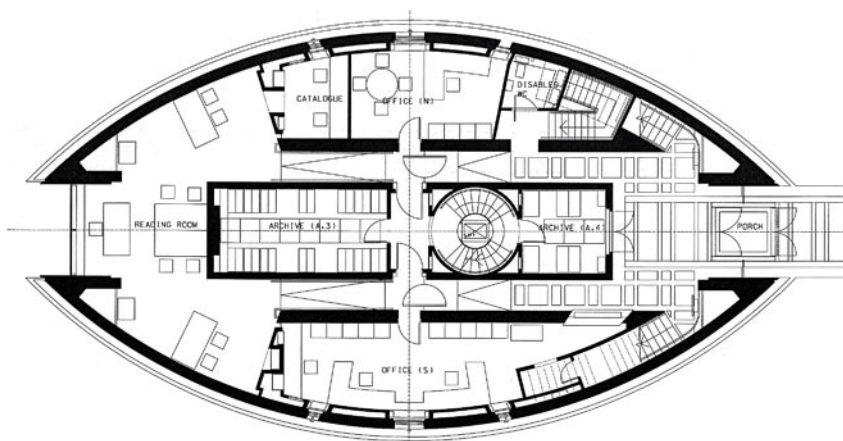
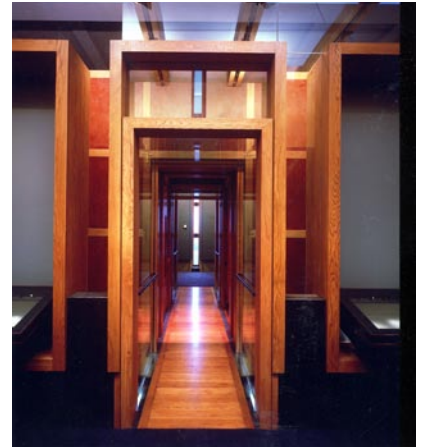
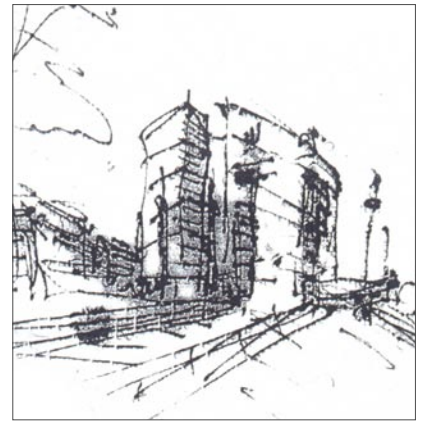


'... One of the most moving buildings of the second half of the century.' Peter Davey

The linear arrangement of the building meets the need for security, with the reading room remote from the entrance and only accessible through secure doors controlled by the curatorial staff.

The construction of the treasury as a 'building within a building' physically isolates the collection, creating the stable atmosphere and environment necessary for conservation of the archive without the need for air conditioning.

The library's massive construction and the inclusion of a basement provide security and environmental inertia to the reading room, the foyer and public galleries above.



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- 2 3
- 4 5

- 1 Concept sketch
- 2 Corridors like Canals of Venice
- 3 Exhibition cases as furniture
- 4 Furniture designed as part of the building
- 5 Ground Floor Plan

Client: Lancaster University
 Completed: 1997
 Cost: £1.725m