

Students' Union University of Warwick

The University of Warwick students' Union is a concrete structure designed by Renton Howard Wood and built in the late 1960s. Never intended to accommodate Students' Union activities the building provides deep, open plan spaces which

are inflexible and disorientating and inhibit the institution's ability to run simultaneous events. The redevelopment proposals aspire to remedy the situation by providing an orienting element which also separates the large open area into distinct zones.

The building has a strong structural language, generated by the coffered slab and chamfered walls. Extensions and insertions are distinct in design and materials and but acknowledge the existing structural logic.

Plaza Frontage Development

The current Campus Masterplan (also by MJP) identifies the opportunity to form a new plaza marking the entrance to the campus, through a new continuous surface and revitalised building frontages. The new plaza cafe and terrace bar provide that active frontage along the Student Union's front elevation.

The new structure provides a dynamic, splayed frontage which acknowledges the existing structural grid and draws the



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- 1 Proposed Plaza Cafe and Terrace Bar overlook plaza
- 2 Existing Students' Union
- 3 Internal View of Terrace Bar
- 4 Existing frontage to plaza

eye through to the central atrium. The cafe and bar terrace will provide a strong relationship between the building and the plaza.

Central Atrium

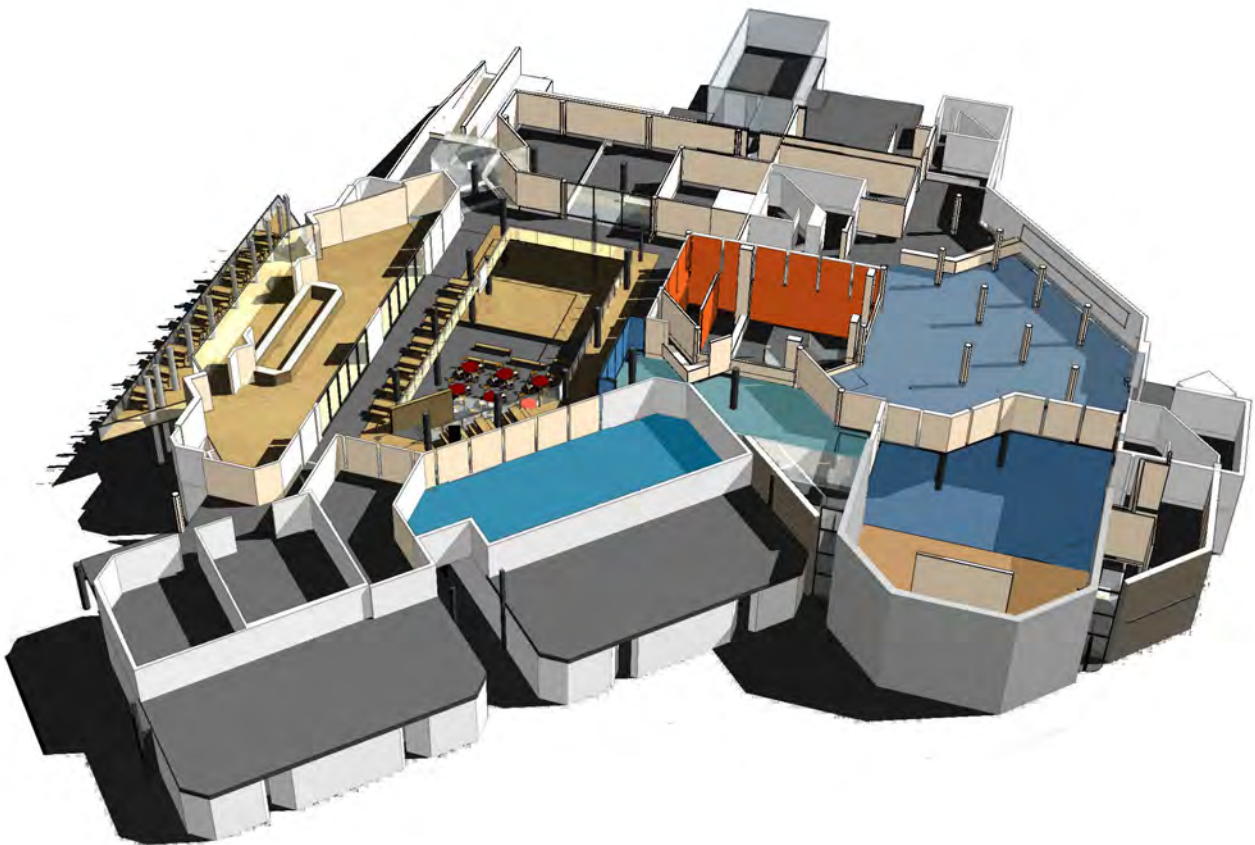
The key to the flexibility of the new Students' Union building is the new atrium, formed by the internalisation, extension and refit of the existing external courtyard space. As well as providing an acoustic buffer and clear circulation route between surrounding bar areas, the atrium provides

a vibrant 'heart' to the building; during the day the rooftop space provides seating for students and staff served by a cafe and juice bar. At night, bars spill out into the seating zones around the space, and form a large foyer to the nightclub at the back of the building.

The atrium will also become a central 'event' hub when the Students Union operates as a single facility (eg during Freshers' Week).

Nightclub Extension

An extension to the rear of the building is formed of strong, simple volumes which also respond to the structure of the existing building; a new double-height stage is contained within a chamfered horse-shoe wall which also provides an external terrace to the expanded 'Graduate' pub above.



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- 1 Aerial cutaway view showing atrium
- 2 Atrium of refurbished Students' Union

Client University of Warwick
 Completion 2009
 Cost £11.5m
 Contract Type JCT.2005