

**ICA Committee on Archival Buildings and Equipment**

**Archive Building Case Studies: Thomas Thomson House**



**Place**

The National Archives of Scotland Thomas Thomson House Edinburgh  
Opening Date: August 1994

**Address**

*give address, telephone number and if available e-mail and web-site addresses*

The National Archives of Scotland  
Thomas Thomson House  
99 Bankhead Crossway North  
Edinburgh EH11 4DX  
telephone: (00 44) 131 535 1370  
e-mail: [Bob.Phillips@nas.gov.uk](mailto:Bob.Phillips@nas.gov.uk)

**Contact name**

*someone to contact with inquiries*

Mr R Phillips, Building Manager  
Dr P Anderson, Deputy Keeper

**Cost of project**

£10.76m(pounds sterling)

**Type of Building**

*new, renovated or extended*  
New

*high thermal mass or high technology*

Both

*over ground or below ground*

Over ground

**Size, as floor area**

*area of repositories*

Archive Storage

Total net floor area including service corridors (ground floor level plus 2 upper storeys)

5,217m<sup>2</sup>

56,156ft<sup>2</sup>

9 fire-compartmented storage rooms, each:

520m<sup>2</sup>

5,600ft<sup>2</sup>

Length x Width:

23.4m x 22.2m

76.8ft x 72.8ft

*area of offices*

Ground floor, records reception and processing including loading bay

651m<sup>2</sup>

7,007ft<sup>2</sup>

1st floor, conservation and binding workshop

479m<sup>2</sup>

5,156ft<sup>2</sup>

Recreation and general purpose rooms

250m<sup>2</sup>

2,691ft<sup>2</sup>

*area of public facilities*

None

*other (eg restaurant, shop etc)*

see above

*area overall of new building*

Site Area - 1.82 hectares

Total net floor area (ground level plus 2 upper storeys)

1,380m<sup>2</sup>

14,854ft<sup>2</sup>

**Readers seats**

None

## **Length of shelving**

*mobile or static*

Shelving efficiency:

9.4 linear m per m<sup>2</sup>

2.5 linear ft per ft<sup>2</sup>

Total linear shelving (approximately):

43km

26.8miles

(There is a combination of mobile and static shelving).

## **Brief description**

*to include any particular features of interest; not more than 100 words*

The strongroom block has a structure and fabric of very high thermal mass. This avoids the needs for a full and continuously operating air-conditioning system. Instead the building envelope itself provides a basically stable internal environment which will require minimal assistance from the control system to maintain the levels of temperature and relative humidity recommended by the British Standard. The construction of the strongroom block incorporates a high level of insulation, and ventilated outer wall cavities to buffer the internal environment from external influences. The roof is of high-integrity welded stainless steel with deep protective overhangs. The administrative wing deliberately contrasts with the solidity of the strongroom block. Large areas of north-facing glazing naturally illuminate offices, sorting areas and the conservation and binding workshop. A 'light slot' through the levels of the plan defines circulation areas, and by allowing air to circulate by 'stack effect', contributes to the natural ventilation of occupied areas. The mechanical and electrical systems within the building includes sophisticated fire detection, security and access control systems, and a high integrity 'triple knock' water sprinkler system for containing fire in the strongrooms. The whole planning strategy has aimed at the highest archival standards with maximum efficiency and minimum maintenance and running costs.