



Award

THE WELLCOME TRUST

Gibbs Building, London

Architect Hopkins Architects **Structural Engineer** WSP Cantor Seinuk **Steelwork Contractor** William Hare Ltd
Construction Manager Mace Ltd **Client** The Wellcome Trust

The Gibbs Building at 215 Euston Road is the new home of the Wellcome Trust. Adjacent to the independent research charity's Greek Revival headquarters (no.183), it provides much needed space for over 500 members of staff. Having won the commission through a design competition held in December 1999, the architects focussed on resolving a number of key issues, responding both to details explicit in the brief and implied throughout the site's unique urban environment. A headquarters was required that would surpass the efficiency and economic viability of a commercial office building, while offering the prestige that an international organisation such as the Wellcome Trust deserves; distinctive but not flashy, timeless but not extravagant. The building would also need to respond to the contrasting urban characteristics of Euston Road and Gower Place, to the compositional order of no. 183, and to the need to integrate Euston Square underground station.

Designed to bring the whole administrative team together from disparate office buildings into a single, inspiring, comfortable, ergonomic and socially dynamic workplace, the building comprises two parallel blocks of open plan, flexible,

office space. Separated by a 9m wide atria, a ten storey 18m deep block addresses the Euston Road 'by-pass', while a 9m wide 5-storey responds more appropriately to the streetscape scale of Gower Place.

Avoiding the banal familiarity of standard office building entrance sequences, where users are traditionally herded through blind lift lobbies to remote and isolated floor plates, in the Gibbs building all users - visitors and staff alike - pass through the lofty atria en-route to the ground floor café and seminar rooms, upper level office spaces or dramatic panoramic roof-scape restaurant. The spatial efficiency of the building is extremely high due to the careful integration of structure and services, with the steel structure being made as slender as possible, braced by plate steel walls, expressed ties and concrete slabs. Through the asymmetrical disposition of the cross section, mini atria, connecting spiral stairs, and differing configurations of atria screens help the building to offer many varied spatial configurations and relationships to the rich urban landscape beyond.



Almost entirely clad in glass, the building incorporates a sophisticated series of triple glazed prefabricated façade cassettes which, while unifying the building through their carefully considered proportion and repeated bay composition, help reduce solar gain and heat build-up during the summer and provide a pre-heated buffer to insulate the building during winter. This component, combined with assisted ventilation through the atria and high day-lighting levels helped achieve an excellent BREEM Excellent rating. The building is exemplary in its detailed execution, demonstrating the highest order of integration. With no excess, no redundancy and no fuss,

Judges' Comment

This 22,000 sq m building in the heart of London is a most successful outcome of structural and architectural design. Steelwork is at the core of the solution.

It has achieved a simple, clear design that is logical and sensitive in its master-planning, sophisticated in its detailing and uncompromising in its execution. The result is a classic of its type. Congratulations are due for this excellent team effort.

the building responds to brief with efficiency and discipline, while producing a working environment that is materially, spatially and functionally rich. Completed in the summer 2004 and occupied shortly afterwards, at a cost of just under £3000 per sq metre, the rigorous attention to detail, careful planning and considered choice of materials sets this building as a benchmark for others to replicate. As a second phase the architects are currently working on the refurbishment of no. 183. Due for completion in 2006, this will be reconfigured as a new public venue incorporating the famous Library and new study rooms with improved access throughout.

