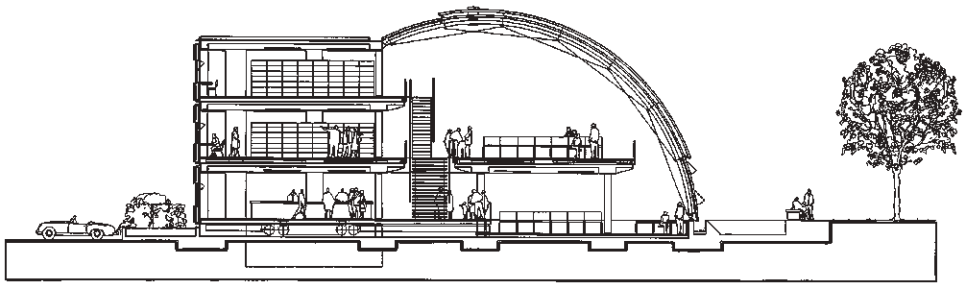
Thames Valley University

Slough



Place
Slough, United Kingdom

Date
1993–1996

Client
Thames Valley University

Cost
£3.6 million

Area
3,500 m²

Cost/m²
£1,029

Structural Engineer
Buro Happold

Services Engineer
Buro Happold

Quantity Surveyor
Hanscomb Ltd

Landscape Architect
Edward Hutchison

Lighting Consultant
Lighting Design Partnership

Main Contractor
Laing South East

Awards

1997
Civic Trust Award
RIBA Architecture in Education Award
RIBA Award
Structural Steel Design Award

We wanted to create a light, sunny, dynamic space – somewhere that inspired a desire for learning. Transparency was key – TVU consists of simple, legible elements, the opposite of a stuffy academy

In 1994, Thames Valley University approached Richard Rogers Partnership (RRP) to carry out a masterplan study for the improvement of the university campus and to identify a potential site for the Learning Resource Centre. A brief then evolved for a building housing books, CD-Roms, space for lap-top computers, open working areas and enclosed seminar rooms. The building's straightforward design provides service and storage areas in a warehouse block, with an open reading and entrance area beneath a lofty space covered by a curved roof. The ground floor is raised by 1.5m to provide an uninterrupted procession between new and existing campus buildings.

The building has three elements; the warehouse block, the curved roof and the surrounding landscape. The construction of each element is simple and economical. With its computer-orientated environment, the building is designed for energy efficiency. Solar control is provided by internal motorised fabric blinds and the roof design allows natural daylight to penetrate to the central aisle of the ground floor, the perimeter of levels one and two and the deck. The 40m long window, which runs the length of the building, affords views of the external pond, which collects rainwater from the curved roof and provides a soothing retreat from the pressures of study.