



Athlone Civic Offices and Library Co Westmeath, Ireland

RIBI Sustainable Building of the Year 2005

keith williams architects



roof terrace and circular rofflight (oculus) above the council debating chamber

COMPLETION

2005

PROJECT AREA

4,200 m²

"Their (KWA) response was an exceptional building which subsequently opened in 2005 where it received a very positive response from public and users alike ."

"We have enjoyed the benefits of this work for several years and the building has proved a practical and pleasant environment in which to work. The building had increased the use of the library service and made the public services we provide more accessible to all."

"We would have no hesitation in recommending KWA as a practice that is capable of producing inspirational, innovative designs."

John Walsh : Town Clerk,
Athlone Town Council

Athlone's multi-award winning 4,200m² civic centre houses the town library, executive offices, debating chamber and public hall. Situated opposite St Mary's Church and Jacobean Tower it is the focal project of a strategic masterplan for the regeneration of the central portion of Athlone. Starting on site in October 2002, the completed project opened in September 2004 to great public acclaim. The project has won ten major design awards and commendations including RIAI Best Sustainable Project 2005, and has been extensively featured in the international press as an exemplar of its typology.

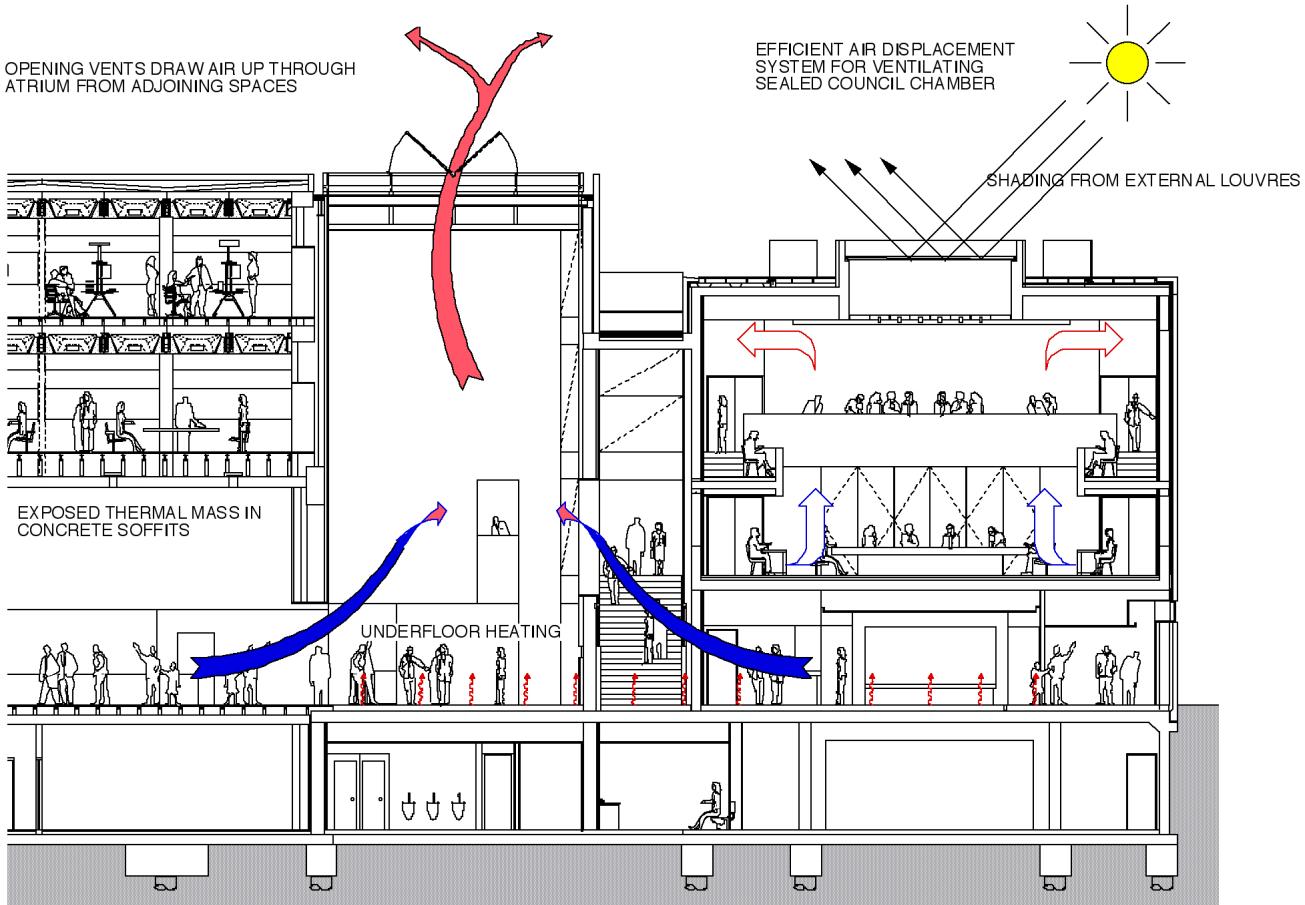


Diagram indicating “fabric first” sustainability principles

Key Successes

- Design and delivery of multi-award winning public building
- New town square as a centre for public events and gatherings as a key part of the town’s urban realm upgrade and placemaking strategy
- New civic centre as a portal for all public services in Athlone and its environs
- The building set new standards of sustainability
- Project delivered to time and budget

Multi-award winning highly functional project

- High quality offices to BCO standards
- Council chamber
- Town library
- One Stop Shop



The new civic centre and town square sits in the eastern (Leinster/Westmeath) quarter of the town in its key historic centre.

Built on brownfield land, the site included the former 1970s council offices, service yards and run-down industrial premises.

Located immediately north of the gothic St Mary's Church with its adjacent Jacobean Tower, the civic centre commands the new town square toward Church Street, Athlone's historic main artery which leads down to the River Shannon and the traditional town centre.

The building is organised formally using four prime compositional elements. The huge toplit public entrance hall from which access to all elements of the building can be gained, is immediately legible from the public square. It contains the ceremonial stair to the

debating chamber and is the key organising space within the building. Immediately to its right when viewed from the new square is the one stop shop with debating chamber above. To the left are two bar-like forms, the lower of the two containing the double height library, and the upper containing the administrative offices on two levels.

The civic centre has been built from a form of pale honed reconstructed stone echoing Athlone's major stone built public structures, the Castle, the grand neo-baroque Church of St Peter & St Paul (1937) and Shannon Bridge.

Remnants of the former town wall and bastion dating from the 17th century were identified during site investigation, and were restored and integrated into the construction of the new town square.

The building set new standards for sustainability and won the RIAI Sustainable Building of the Year Award 2005.

"Keith Williams' response to the challenge of creating a municipal monument for a new age is both confident and convincing, an assured performance."

Kenneth Powell
The Architectural Review



council debating chamber with oculus above



main atrium and entrance to one stop shop

Awards

2006

Chicago Athenaeum International Architecture Prize
 Irish Concrete Society Awards 2006
 AAI Awards 2006

International Award Winner
 Overall Award Winner
 Special Mention

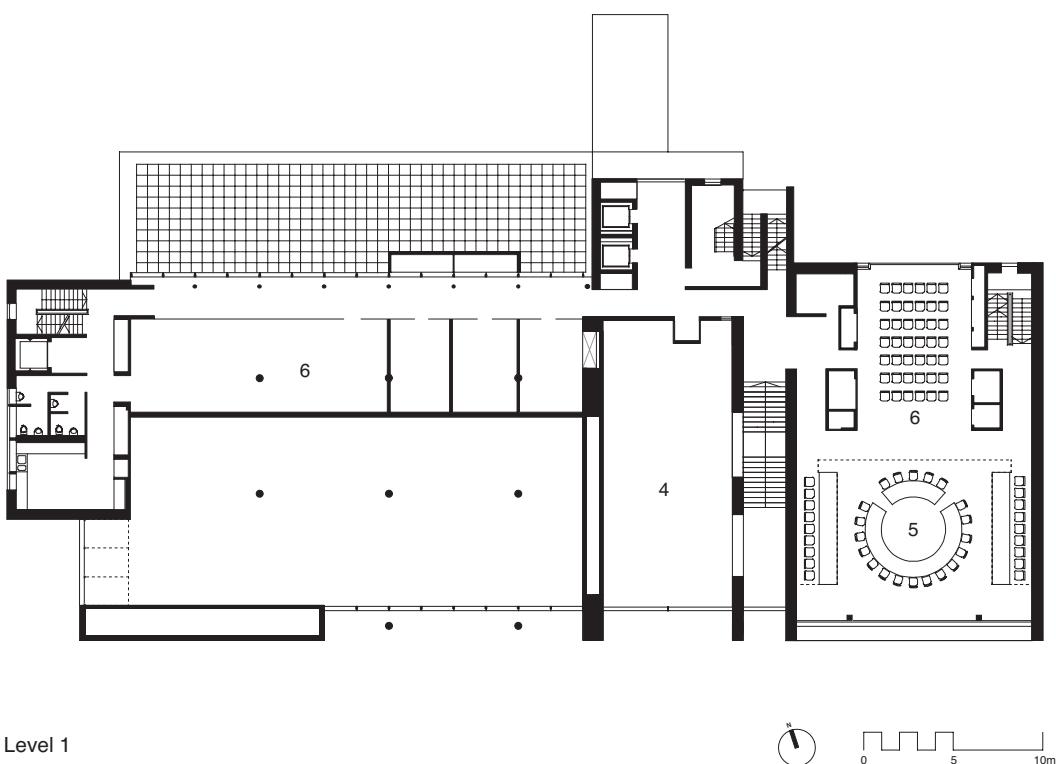
2005

Opus Architecture & Construction Awards
 RIBA Awards 2005 RIBA European Award
 RIAI Awards 2005 : Special Award
 Best Sustainable Project
 RIAI Awards 2005
 Lighting Design Awards 2005
 Best Exterior Lighting Project
 Sustainable Building of the Year 2005
 BCI International Award 2005

Award Winner
 Award Winner
 Award Winner
 Award Winner
 Award Winner
 Shortlisted
 Shortlisted

KEY:

1. Entrance Atrium
2. One-stop Shop
3. Library
4. Void
5. Debating Chamber
6. Meeting Rooms
7. Offices
8. Children's Library
9. Roof Terrace
10. Oculus
11. New Town Square



Facts & Figures

Project Title	: Athlone Civic Offices & Public Library
Client	: Athlone Town Council & Westmeath County Council
Design Programme	: Nov 2000 - Oct 2002
Construction Programme	: Nov 2002 - Sept 2004
Official Opening	: May 2005
Budget	: €15.6 million
Area	: 4,200m ²

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