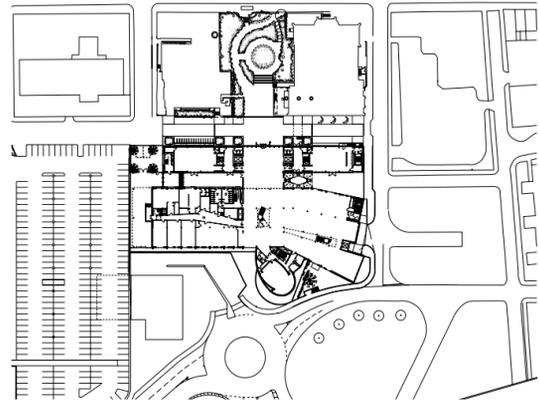




Left: The copper clad performance space.
 Above: Peter Freemans light installation on the west elevation.
 Below: The entry sequence from Union Street flows through the garden courtyard and double height lobby to the terrace, reading rooms and performance space all of which are orientated toward the distant moorlands.



'Pringle Richards Sharratt's new library and learning centre joins its four year old Gallery Oldham in the city's burgeoning cultural quarter. This phase of the project may be PFI, but the architect has triumphed creating a striking, highly usable space. The entire building - both buildings - demonstrate a set of responses both restrained and muscular.'

Phil Griffin, Building Design

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council/Kier Project Investments
 6,300 m²
 £12 million
 2004-2005

PRINGLE RICHARDS SHARRATT ARCHITECTS Studio 11 Cambridge Court Kennington Park 1 Brixton Road London SW9 6DE T +44 (0)20 7793 3838 F +44 (0)20 7793 3839 mailbox@prsarchitects.com www.prsarchitects.com



LIBRARY & LIFELONG LEARNING CENTRE, OLDHAM



The Library and Lifelong Learning Centre is the second phase of the new Cultural Quarter in Oldham, and is situated adjacent to the first phase – Gallery Oldham.

The approach to the Library and Learning Centre is through the double height entrance foyer of the Gallery, now increased in size to form an access hub for the Gallery, Library and Lifelong Learning Centre at the very heart of the Quarter.

The building form peels away from the linear gallery forming a tapered terrace to the cafe and orientating the building towards the broad expanse of distant moorlands to the South and East.

Views from the second floor Galleries toward the South are maintained and enhanced by a sedum roof to the library and a 'blade of light' – a north-light that reflects the sky and extends along the length of the new building.

Public areas are located across two open floors, with exposed concrete soffits articulated by linear slots cut through the

floor and roof slabs, allowing the stairs, lifts and daylight to penetrate through and link the floors together.

Terracotta panels, exposed concrete and cast glass – the palette of materials used on Gallery Oldham – has been used again to present an articulated single building.

A performance space enclosed within an oval form and clad in copper, is dramatically expressed against the regular texture of the southern elevation, providing a strong image when viewed from the by-pass and the southern wards of Oldham.

As with Gallery Oldham the use of free energy has been maximized where possible – daylight, thermal mass, natural ventilation, and solar shading are all employed to minimise running costs while at the same time introducing a feeling of wellbeing.

The building was procured via a Private Finance Initiative with Kier and Barclays Bank forming the SPV.



Far left & left: The double height entrance foyer forms an access hub to the gallery, library and learning centre.
Below left: A stair rising through a light slot articulates the library reading areas.
Below: Daylight penetration and views out create an open and uplifting ambience to the deep plan footprint..



Left: Simple unadorned spaces meet the needs of today and provide the flexibility for future iterations.
Below left & below: folds and slots around the primary circulation routes enhance and articulate the central zone of the floorplate.
Right: Near distant views frame and present the local neighbourhood to those using the building..



'The library and its community facilities are actively used by people from all backgrounds. The building site was not touched during the 2001 riots, although it was very close to the disturbances'

Ted Cantle, head of the Institute of Community Cohesion and who led the Home Office investigation into the 2001 riots.