

Mountbatten Update

Issue 02 | January 2009

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Investing in science and technology

The Mountbatten complex is a £100m investment in UK science and technology

Just three years after a major fire destroyed one of the University's leading research facilities a striking new building has taken its place. The new £55M Mountbatten Building on the Highfield Campus is one of Europe's leading multidisciplinary clean room complexes. It provides flexible research space for world-leading technology development in nanotechnology and photonics for the Southampton Nanofabrication Centre (SNC), which is part of the School of Electronics and Computer Science (ECS), and the Optoelectronics Research Centre (ORC).

"The stunning design of the building matches our claim to be leading edge and state-of-the art, and is a fitting home for the world-leading research it will facilitate," says Professor Harvey Rutt, Head of ECS. "It was, of course, also essential that the new building could accommodate the multi-million pound pieces of equipment necessary for our research."

"The stringent demands of research at the nanoscale necessitate a vibration-free environment," explains Harvey. "This has been achieved through extensive analysis and modelling before construction began, resulting in an exceptionally thick and stiff concrete frame which 'designs out' vibrations."



Architect's impression of stairwell



Completed atrium with stairwell

The building, which opened to staff and students in November, makes a substantial statement – both inside and out. It provides clean rooms, clean laboratories, optical and technical laboratories, research and office areas, social space and seminar rooms, major plant space, and an atrium reception with a cantilevered feature staircase.

"I am very excited at the prospect of getting our laboratories back after three years of making-do in temporary facilities," says Professor David Payne, Director of the ORC. "This magnificent clean room building is unique and world leading in its imaginative vision for integration of nanoscience, photonics and optical fibre technology."

"The facilities and the environment will enable us to carry out fundamental and transformative research at the nanoscale and to forge new partnerships with others working at the leading edge of technology," adds Harvey Rutt. "This building fully realises the University's commitment made the day after the fire to ensure that our research would continue in even better and more appropriate surroundings."

David agrees: "With the fire well and truly behind us, we can now rapidly rebuild our reputation as the foremost photonics centre in the world. We are desperate to get our hands on all that new equipment and show the world we are back in business."

