

Financial Times

# ARCHITECTURE AT WORK

1986 Award for Industrial and Commercial Buildings



Winner

# Assessors' Report

The assessors studied 78 entries this year and from them they selected 12 buildings to visit; buildings as varied as the Allied Dunbar Tricentre in Swindon, a small building for Cambridge On-Line Systems for designing and making software and very small starter workshops in Basingstoke and Stradbroke in Suffolk.

They thought that the general standard was quite high and they were encouraged by the care and quality that many companies are now seeking in their new Company Headquarters. But the assessors' choice was not easy, since no one building stood head and shoulders above the others.

They therefore decided to commend four schemes and to give the prize for a scheme that is particularly inventive and responsive to its environment.

The first three commended schemes all have more or less exposed structures and attempt to use them to cover more complex plan systems than the mono-cellular spaces for which they have been used in the past; as for example in last year's joint winner, the Schlumberger building in Cambridge. So, though the assessors admire the three schemes for various reasons, including the energy of their composition, they feel that they have all three had some trouble in the resolution of plan, section and structure.

## The Award

The Financial Times Architecture at Work Award for 1986 has been given to the **Megget Reservoir and Control Building**, near Selkirk in Scotland, and the assessors wish to include in the prize the white tower spillway that sits in the lake, the stilling pool, the dam itself and the whole composition of the giant landscape of the scheme.

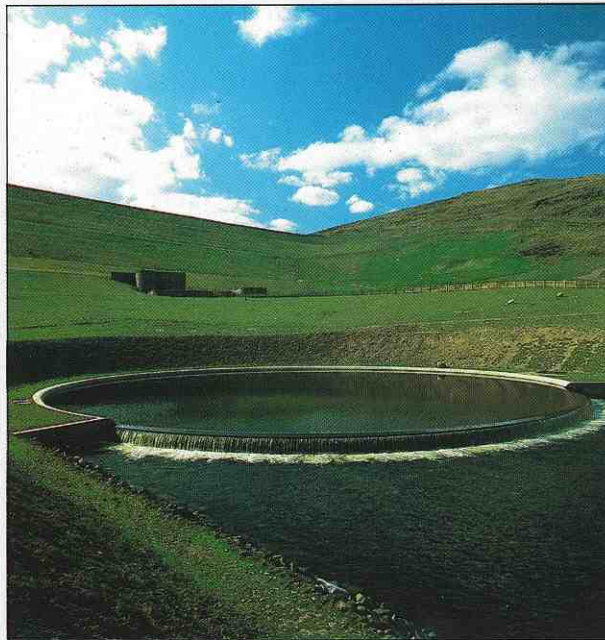
The stone and steel entrance gates, the portal in the hillside that leads to the waterpipes to Edinburgh and the entrance to the Control Building are all consistently carried out in a well-composed development and enlargement of the local drystone wall vernacular. The Control Building is below the surface of the dam which allows the dam to be the major element in the landscape and permits wildlife and plant life the same opportunity to colonise the valley as it had before.

The Control Room is itself very well designed and is connected to the elegant white tower by a blue tunnel and in the other direction down to the very effective (literally and in landscape terms) stilling pool, whence the burn proceeds down the valley.

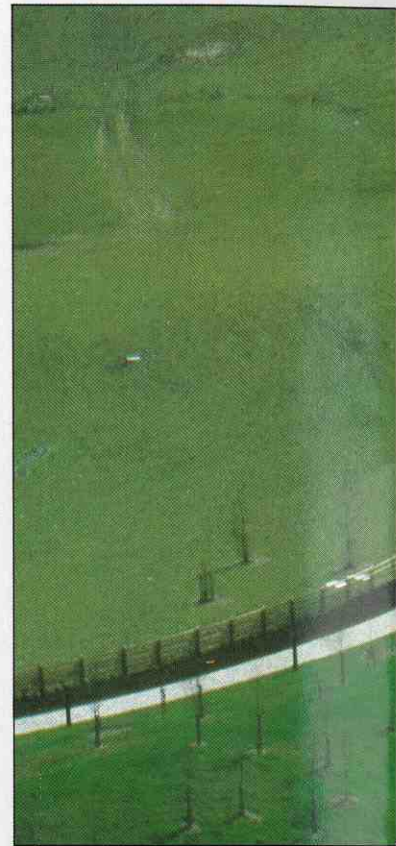
All the elements combine together to contribute and respond to the large scale of the lake and the beautiful surrounding landscape; good in the detail of their design, and good as the parts of a bold whole. The assessors are happy to give the Award to this scheme.



# Winner



1



2



3

## **Megget Reservoir and Control Building, Cappercleuch, Selkirk, Scotland**

Architect: W J Cairns & Partners

Engineer: R H Cuthbertson & Partners

Client: Lothian Regional Council

Contractor: Whatlings (Civil Engineering) Ltd

Front cover: Megget Reservoir Control Building, Stilling Pool, Dam and Outlet Tower.

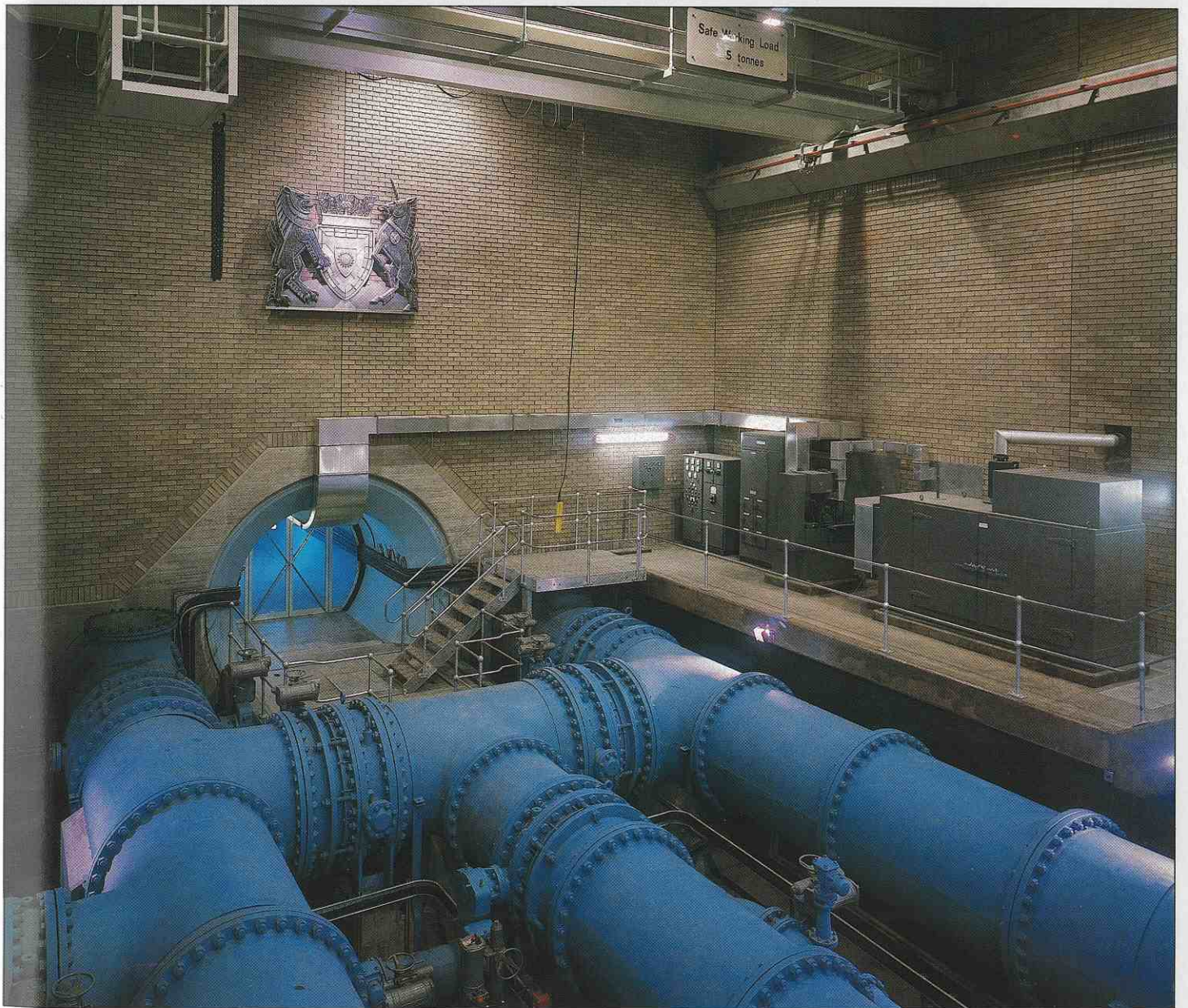
1 Stilling pool.

2 Entrance to the Control Building.

3 The 'blue tunnel' which connects the Control Room to the Outlet Tower.

4 Control Building interior.

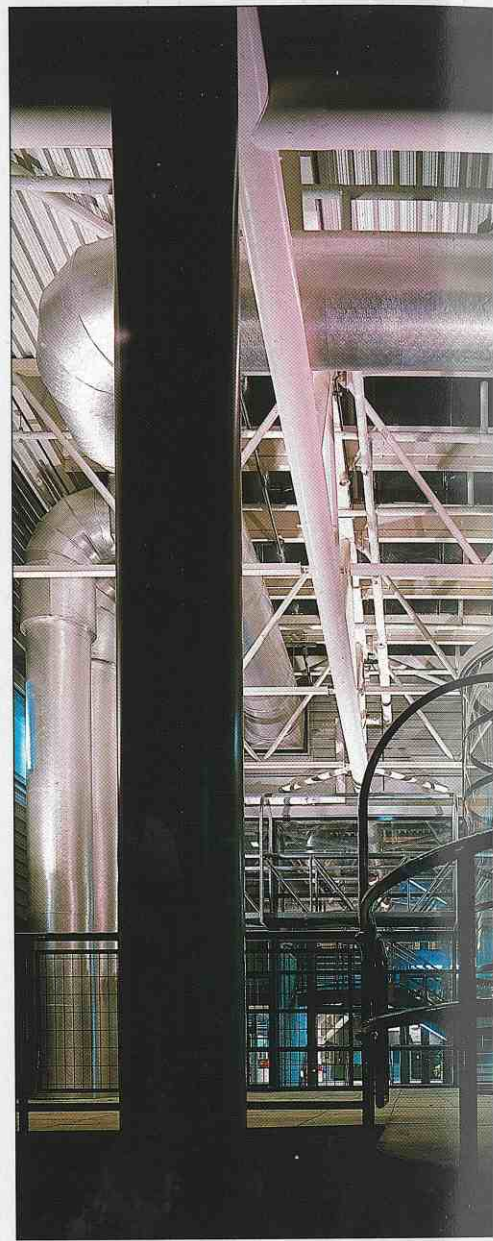








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# Commendation

## 1 J Sainsbury plc, Supermarket, Kingsmead Road, Canterbury, Kent

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Architect: Ahrends Burton & Koralek

Engineer: Ernest Green & Partners

Client: J Sainsbury plc

Contractor: Wiltshier Ltd

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## 2 Link Centre, Whitehill Way, Westlea, Swindon, Wiltshire

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Architect: Thamesdown Borough Council, Architects Department

Engineer: Anthony Hunt Associates

Client: Thamesdown Borough Council

Contractor: Bovis Construction Limited

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## 3 Lennox Wood, Southwater Business Park, Horsham, Sussex

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Architect: Michael Aukett Associates

Engineer: Anthony Hunt Associates

Client: Sun Alliance Insurance Group

Contractor: IDC Limited

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## 4 Newcastle Travel Centre, Central Station, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear

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Architect: Regional Architect's Office, Chief Architect's Department, British Railways Board, York

Engineer: Regional Civil Engineer, British Rail Eastern Region

Client: British Railways Board

Contractor: Shepherd Construction Ltd

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# Commendations

**The Link Sports and Social Centre in Swindon** is commended for its asymmetrical composition of many varied elements under the great canopy of a suspended, rectangular and mono-planar roof. The skill and high speed with which the building was designed and built is reflected in the infectious enthusiasm of its occupants, which extended as far as push-starting the jury's car swiftly and effectively at the end of their visit.

The reason that it was not given the prize is partly a result of this very quick pace of design, construction and occupation, resulting in a certain amount of rather inconsistent detailing and some clumsy junctions.

The assessors also commend the **Sainsbury's supermarket at Canterbury** for its powerful external roof structure of silver masts, spars and ties, both well designed in its own right and as a complement to the Cathedral. This lovely roof structure also serves to make an excellent elevation along the main front and is completed by the addition of a very elegant tensioned pedestrian canopy. However, the assessors were a little disappointed by the other sides of the building which actually form fronts to other roads in the town, and the interiors of the service areas were poorly detailed and finished.

But the commendation stands firmly on the notable achievement of responding inventively and elegantly to a numinous environment without the pastiche so often favoured by supermarkets.

**The Sun Alliance building at Lennox Wood**, near Horsham, is commended for its calm, almost Palladian quality in the landscape of a major new public park, including its delightful use of the old device of the 'ha-ha.' The building also has smart and comfortable interiors and provides an excellent working environment.

The realisation of the simple cross structure of the building is more suited to its glass elevations than to its opaque ones and it has some difficulty going round the corners of the L shaped plan: but the building serves as a fine example for future Company Headquarters in country or suburban settings.

The assessors also wish to commend one further building, which in some senses is not a building at all, but a clever insertion. **The Newcastle Travel Centre** is placed plumb in the middle of the restored 19th Century railway station. It has neither the somewhat temporary quality of so many of the post-war insertions into our great stations, nor does it seek to repeat or copy the station itself; rather it is its own bold, tensile and joyful self, in scale with and a complement to the fine building in which it sits.

The Financial Times wishes to thank all the entrants for the time and trouble they took and to encourage them and the sponsors to keep up their high standards.

The Financial Times Architecture at Work Award was established in 1982 to encourage the highest possible architectural and environmental standards in places where people work. A three man jury visits the short listed buildings and is concerned as much about the working environment as the physical appearance of the architecture.

In 1986 the assessors were architects Edward Cullinan and Richard Rogers (until August) with Lord Gibson as the layman.

Winners of the Financial Times Architecture at Work Award:

1982 Joint Winners

**Amersham International plc**

Radiochemical Centre, Cardiff

designed by the Percy Thomas Partnership

**The Humber Bridge, Humberside**

designed by Freeman Fox and Partners

1983

**Gateway House, Basingstoke, Hampshire**

designed by Arup Associates

1984

**Renault Centre, Swindon, Wiltshire**

designed by Foster Associates

1985 Joint Winners

**1 Finsbury Avenue, London EC2**

designed by Arup Associates

**Schlumberger Research Centre, Cambridge**

designed by Michael Hopkins and Partners