

76. British Architecture: University Buildings, 1971

Modern architecture tends to be regarded by the layman as 'rectangular slabs of concrete', based on the fundamental shape of the match-box. Some modern buildings, notably the ring of skyscraper towers embracing St Paul's Cathedral in the City of London, and the UN headquarters building in New York, lend credence to public opinion. That there are more acceptable forms of modern buildings was agreeably demonstrated by the Post Office in the third series of 'British Architecture' stamps issued on 22 September 1971. The designs – of both the buildings and the stamps – were in marked contrast to the previous issues, 'Cathedrals' in 1969 and 'Rural Architecture' in 1970, and showed some distinctive university buildings.

Designed by a newcomer to stamp design, Nicholas Jenkins, the four stamps depicted the Physical Sciences Building, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth (3p), Faraday Building, Southampton University (5p), Engineering Department, Leicester University (7½p) and the Hexagon Restaurant, Essex University (9p). They were selected from a number of submitted designs, including some by Ronald Maddox.

The Physical Sciences Building at Aberystwyth has a subtle curve which denies the match-box convention – the architects were Sir Percy Thomas and Son, and the building has reinforced concrete frame and floors, with external glass mosaic panels, housing a group of science departments: physics, pure mathematics, applied mathematics and statistics. The stamp is captioned in English and Welsh. Southampton University's Faraday Building, completed in 1963, has cantilevered 'layer-cake' floors stemming from a concrete core containing lifts and stairs. It houses electrical engineering laboratories, drawing offices, workshops and study rooms, and the architects were Sir Basil Spence, Bonnington and Collins.

Leicester's Department of Engineering, also completed in 1963, resembles an up-ended 'Swan Vestas' box, but this was apparently in its favour as the building won the American 'R S Reynolds' Memorial Association award for 1965. The work of architects James Gowan and James Stirling, it has large areas of aluminium-framed glass and con-



crete clad in red tile, containing research laboratories, workshops and two lecture theatres. The Hexagon Restaurant of the University of Essex at Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, was designed by Architects Co-Partnership – it is built of reinforced concrete and is adjacent to a raised pedestrian street which runs through the centre of the University.

Nicholas Jenkins, a graphic design teacher at the Royal College of Art, was born in 1939, and studied at the Byam Shaw School of Art and St. Martin's School of Art, working first as a mural painter, then latterly as a freelance. He has held lecture appointments at Yale University and the Rhode Island School of Art and Design in the United States.

The stamps were printed in photogravure by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 100 (10 x 10) on unwatermarked paper with two phosphor bands. Very few varieties have been noted – only the lemon omitted (background skyline) on the 3p stamp and 'phosphor omitted' on all values. Quantities sold were: 3p 57,975,114; 5p 9,843,757; 7½p 7,640,465; 9p 5,628,511; and presentation packs, 87,159.

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