



## REPAIR Good Practice Example: Medway, Drill Hall Library



Connecting cities  
Building successes



## ***The Drill Hall at HMS Pembroke was completed by 1902 as part of the first phase of the development of the Royal Naval Barracks in Chatham.***

*The building was constructed to provide an indoor space in which the exercise and training of navy personnel could be undertaken during inclement weather.*

It has also been used as an overflow barracks, exhibition centre, naval store and building materials warehouse. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Drill Hall saw considerable damage as a direct result of wartime action and has been rebuilt substantially on three occasions.

By the time the Chatham Dockyard was closed in 1984 HMS Pembroke was partially derelict: the Upper part of Pembroke had remained occupied by the naval academy and was maintained in a good state of repair, whereas Lower Pembroke had been allowed to fall into disrepair and was almost entirely derelict. It was clear that an enormous amount of work would be required to restore the buildings and bring life into the area again.

In 1996, Medway was the only town in Britain, of similar size, without a Higher Education establishment.



Conveniently, at this time the Universities of Greenwich and Canterbury Christ Church were facing big challenges to locate the space they would require in future accommodating the expected growth of students and planned academic courses. After a period of time the University representatives agreed that they would have to work together to develop a plan to locate some of their future delivery to students in the Medway area.

The Universities at Medway, a tri-partite collaboration between the University of Greenwich, the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University on a single campus located in Chatham, Medway, United Kingdom came about in 1996. The decision to locate to Chatham was made mainly because the buildings already located on the site, now known as Chatham Maritime, were considered ideal for the purpose of education and training, being long, wide and without many internal walls (as may be seen on the deck of the sailing ships). In addition, the National Research Establishment that had been located in Medway some years earlier had converted many of the former Naval Academy buildings into laboratories.

The problem here in 1996 was to find a suitable library facility capable of accommodating the research and study needs of 5000 students initially and the future needs, expected to exceed 13,500 students. With three Universities located over a wide area the solution was considered to be a centrally located building and The Drill Hall fitted the bill. The problem was; how to fund this?

At the same time the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) took over the development responsibility for the Chatham Maritime site and a partnership was forged between the 3 Universities and SEEDA to obtain funding to undertake the enormous development project ahead. Subsequently the Universities at Medway were formed, incorporating the University of Greenwich, University of Canterbury Christ Church and University of Kent. Professor Alan Reed, University of Greenwich said,

*"The key technique employed in the project was the development of a 'partnership' between the three organisations. It would not have been possible for one entity to generate the level of investment necessary to move it forward."*

***By working closely with SEEDA, Universities at Medway secured £50 million of Government funds to achieve the redevelopment of the extensive new research and laboratory facilities.***

*The Drill Hall Library and the newly built Pilkington Building are both located in the Lower Pembroke area where the level of remediation of structures and land was substantial and presented a considerable challenge.*

A vast amount of money was required to undertake the renovation of the Drill Hall to make it a building suitable and fit for its new purpose. As a result it is the centrepiece of the development and provides a magnificent learning resource centre offering 100,000 square feet of space and housing a full library, with computers, study areas and teaching rooms.



The Drill Hall Library facility sits at the very heart of the Universities of Kent Campus providing a superb shared facility for all students. It is this facility which acts as a catalyst for further development of the campus and its student base.

The Pilkington Building, named after the designer Colonel Henry Pilkington, located next door is converted from the naval canteen and contains a lecture theatre, exhibition space, teaching rooms, a bistro-style café and is the base for the Universities at Medway Student Association.



The university links with other educational establishments have led to development of the campus into a major higher education centre in the Medway region known collectively as the Universities at Medway. There is a new engineering research block, the Wolfson Centre, specialising in bulk solid handling, and additional laboratory facilities for Medway School of Pharmacy and the School of Science.



This massive expansion of facilities on the Universities of Kent at Medway Campus has brought about the broader sustainable development in the surrounding area and leads to more employment, increased wealth and improved social conditions for the community.

Professor Reed added, "Through building a strong and meaningful partnership with the local authority the Universities of Kent were able to generate the funds necessary to create a catalyst for growth. As a result have secured the long-term future of this military heritage site."

***The ultimate achievement of the development of the Universities at Medway facility in the old Drill Hall Library is the agreement that the facilities shall be shared, not only between students but also with all Medway residents.***

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