Project Description – Small Animal Hospital

Located at the entrance to the grounds of the Garscube Estate, Glasgow, the new Small Animal Hospital, part of the University of Glasgow’s Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, provides state of the art services for animal owners and referring practitioners throughout Scotland and Northern England, including the most advanced diagnostic, therapeutic and surgical techniques.

The primary driver in the design for this facility was how to create a large hospital building without ruining the beautiful green space for which the Garscube Estate is justly renowned. Essentially, the solution was to use the topography of the site, lift up the ground, peeling off the grass and place the new building underneath.

As various aspects of the new facility did not require natural light – much of its 4500 sq m involves internal spaces such as the treatment area, oncology and diagnostics – this design solution was able to meet the needs of the hospital whilst maintaining the integrity of the location. In order to let daylight in to public areas, an innovative ‘crystal’ glass cupola, sits within the building’s sloping grass roof. This creates a presence to the street and an iconic public image to the local and wider community.

The notion of idea of roof and ground is further emphasised through the introduction of a heavy gabion base.

Internally the building is simply organised both horizontally and vertically with a clear division of public and private hospital space. The working hospital held within the gabion wall pinwheels around a central treatment hub which acts as the heart of the building offering clear and unrestricted views to wards, daycare, intensive care, operating suites, diagnostics and oncology. The teaching and office spaces occupy the upper level with views over the estate and access onto the grass roof.