



Explore@Bristol

by WilkinsonEyre

Explore@Bristol was a millennium project, as well as the first in a new generation of Exploratory Science Centres. The brief called for the conversion of a listed Great Western Railways train shed to provide a flexible, environmentally friendly space housing a wide range of hands-on science exhibits.

The existing 1906 Hennebique reinforced concrete structure was sympathetically restored and adapted; new glazing at ground floor level was set back from the existing grid to create an arcade and allow the rhythm of the existing structure to remain clearly visible. A bridge from the first floor gallery leads to a planetarium, housed in a shiny stainless steel sphere 15m in diameter, and partially surrounded by water. This exciting structure provides a dramatic focus for the new pedestrian piazza in front of the building. An acrylic cylinder in the north gallery houses a eutectic thermal storage system, visible as hundreds of pink plastic spheres, and aptly demonstrating to the public the responsive building systems within.



Details

Location: Bristol, UK
Client: Explore@Bristol
Architect: WilkinsonEyre
Structural Engineer: Arup
Area: 6,765m²
Value: £10.2m
Completed: April 2000

Awards

Civic Trust Urban Design Award 2002
RIBA Regional Award 2001