ADP was appointed as architect and lead consultant to develop the design of the new undergraduate library at the University of Leeds. The new £28m library is to house predominantly undergraduate library facilities, currently located in the Edward Boyle Library on the main campus. We were also asked to assist in the wider future strategy and business case for the university’s libraries as a whole.

ADP’s new undergraduate library is designed to provide 1000 reader seats, flexible training rooms, a skills zone, community classrooms and café, plus flexible space for 6800 linear metres of book stock.

The design creates a highly sustainable landmark building that provides an IT-rich and flexible facility. This is expected to improve the current student experience, and exceed new student expectations on an important site for both the university and the city of Leeds. The library will be positioned within a Conservation Area, surrounded by listed buildings and will be the first city-fronting building the university has commissioned for over 30 years.

The design approach has been to create a building that accommodates the undergraduate library in one distinct volume that has an atrium as a social ‘heart’ space. The entrance and social learning spaces spill into this atrium. On the upper floors, the group study spaces are located directly off the atrium, providing critical spaces for the development of a ‘knowledge share’ culture. Quieter book stock and study areas are located on the upper floors, affording dramatic views towards the campus and the city.

The building form is carved from a single block to respect the immediate context, protected views and to maximise vistas to the University and the city. Large voids are introduced to maximise physical and visual links within the interior. Picture windows capture key elements of important and directly adjacent buildings. Large ceiling heights in key locations give scale and gravitas to such an important building, while smaller and more intimate spaces are to be created to give students a rich and varied experience of the building.

The building will be tendered in December 2012, and due for completion in August 2014.

Client: University of Leeds
Services: Architectural
Contract Value: £28m
Completion Date: Current