

Won in competition with Bouygues UK, this landmark mixed use building forms part of the regeneration of Dagenham Heathway, incorporating community and residential facilities and elements of public realm. Located within one of the mayor's 100 'Key Public Spaces', and occupying a prominent corner location on the Heathway, the new building has been designed to function as the hub of the regeneration masterplan and a catalyst to further investment.

The scheme provides the Borough's first new Public Library for over 20 years, with additional 'Customer-First' facilities, 86 private and affordable apartments, and a retail unit at street level. The design needed to be integrated into the existing fabric of the street and evolving public realm improvements.

Accommodating two different functions with opposite public faces, the building is fronted by a new 'Gateway Square' for the town centre, a public space offering an attractive place for people to meet, learn and relax. The massing of the building has been split clearly into two parts, one containing the Public Library and the other containing residential accommodation. The community facilities are accessed by a single main entrance on the open corner of the

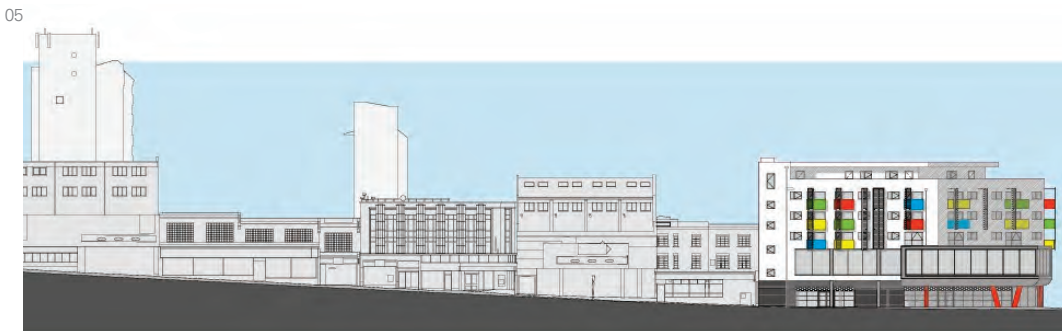
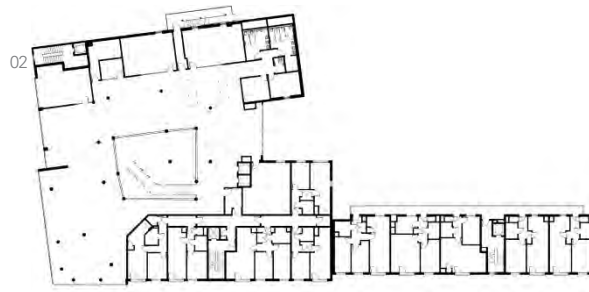
building, marked with large doors that are set within floor to ceiling glazing, creating a visual connection between the outside public space and the inside semi-public space.

The plan is provided in a manner which fosters the Borough's aim to provide excellent customer services in an open, friendly and 'transparent' community facility, to promote high aspirations and integration with the public space. The facilities are arranged to make visitors to the centre welcome and to provide a seamless transition from the 'Customer-First' facilities to the library.

All of the functions are laid out before the visitor on the ground floor and an open mezzanine, with a glass feature lift and grand main staircase situated near the entrance and façade providing a clear circulation route around the library. A projecting 'box' over the entrance defines the reading room within the library. This is a strong architectural element designed to give the building presence on the street and allow it to be seen from the tube station and Heathway. A subtle but defined security line is provided within the building, helping to maintain boundaries in a non-confrontational environment.



01 Building exterior
02 ICT space
03 Public Library entrance



- 01 Main library staircase
- 02 Ground floor plan
- 03 Site plan
- 04 Library interior
- 05 West elevation
- 06 Coloured balcony façade

Total Area : 6395sqm NIA (1814 library; 380 retail; 4201 residential)
 Procurement Type : Design and Build
 Local Authority : London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
 Interior Design credit : Evolution Architects

Also important in the creation of a truly multi-use building is the integration of housing; 86 new apartments, of which 10 are affordable housing 26 are shared ownership, and 50 are privately owned, are situated directly above the community facilities, with access to the private realm placed away from the main public entrance.

A mixture of mesh screens and projected, coloured balconies on the façade run around the building to give a strong form and offer the greatest possible views and present an interesting and attractive appearance to bring people into the building to use the library and civic facilities on offer.

Community support for the scheme has been overwhelmingly positive; over 2000 people visited the Library on the first day of opening, with 150 new members joining and 1000 items issued.