

RAL

DESIGN & DISCOVERY

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RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING RESEARCH COUNCIL

COUNCIL WORKS UNIT

The Council Works Unit (CWU) was established in April 1972, and is based at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Chilton. The Unit's terms of reference are as follows: "To provide to all Council establishments and other nominated participants a consulting engineering service; to undertake new works of a specified magnitude and give advice on the maintenance of plant and buildings; and to provide advice as required by Operating Divisions on construction work financed from Research Grants." Establishments where work is regularly carried out include the Daresbury Laboratory (DL), Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL), Royal Greenwich Observatory (RGO), Royal Observatory Edinburgh (ROE), Swindon Office (SO) together with the London Pied-a-Terre and the mountain top observatories at La Palma and Hawaii including their base headquarters.

Many of the facilities required at the SERC's establishments are of a very special nature. An example of this is the proposal currently at outline design stage for an enclosure to house a new 8m Optical Telescope to be constructed on either La Palma or Hawaii. Various design alternatives have been investigated in order to meet the technical requirements within a limited budget. The enclosure will have a diameter of approximately 30 metres and an overall height of approximately 22 metres.

The largest project to be completed in recent years has been the design and construction of the new Royal Greenwich Observatory at Cambridge. The £4m building was completed in March of this year. The facilities provided include offices, laboratories, plate library and measuring machines, library, conference rooms, computer and terminal rooms, workshops and a telescope simulator. The new building was officially opened by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on 14 June 1990.

Another scheme recently completed has been a development at The Cosener's House, Abingdon to provide extensive seminar facilities, hostel accommodation and a new kitchen. Great care was necessary in the design as the existing house is Grade 2 Listed within a highly sensitive Conservation Area on the banks of the River Thames.

The Council Works Unit projects are many and varied, ranging from small schemes like building new toilets to large developments costing millions of pounds both in the United Kingdom and overseas.