

# School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Complete

Area

Client

Architect

2011

UK England

University of London

John McAslan & Partners

The University of London is the only Higher Education institution in Europe specialising in the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The library houses over 1.2 million volumes together with a major collection of archives, manuscripts, rare books and special collections. As one of only five National Research Libraries in the UK, the library attracts scholars from all over the world to consult its holdings and further their research.

The refurbishment of the ground and lower floors provided a new reception, study rooms, music practice rooms and archive facility.



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SOAS\\_Library\\_interior\\_view.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SOAS_Library_interior_view.jpg)

## Services provided

Sandy Brown Associates was appointed by the Architect to provide acoustic advice on the refurbishment. Acoustic criteria and design strategy covered:

- mitigation of noise ingress into the library
- internal acoustic separation between spaces within the library
- room acoustics and acoustic finishes
- building services noise & vibration control.

## Special acoustic features

The design proposed the removal of the existing sound absorbent ceiling and replacing it with exposed concrete soffit. As this would increase the reverberation time in this key space the use acoustic baffles were proposed, located directly above the book shelves. This allowed the library to maintain similar reverberation to the pre-existing space.

A key design aspiration was to use glazed partitions between the music rooms and the library to link the spaces and keep a visual connection. As this would provide a lower level of acoustic separation between the two spaces, audio demonstrations were used to assist the Client in understanding the expected levels of noise breakout associated with the various music sessions. This allowed management of the spaces to be planned and noisier sessions to be arranged to coincide with the library's least busy times.