

[News story: Archive design wins top architectural awards](#)

Described by judges as “an impressive industrial building” and “beautifully sculpted”, the facility near Wick was one of a range of new designs that won praise from both the Royal Institute of British Architects and the The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. The awards were announced at an event in Glasgow last week.

Nucleus (The Nuclear and Caithness Archives) was among 49 RIBA winners, selected from more than 600 UK entries, and one of 12 Scottish RIAS winners.

Designed by Edinburgh-based [Reiach and Hall Architects](#), it will now be a contender for the RIAS Andrew Doolan Best Building in Scotland Award later this year, which is supported by the Doolan family and the Scottish Government, which will be named in in November.

Simon Tucker, the NDA’s Head of Information Governance, said:

We are absolutely delighted that Nucleus has been named as one of the best buildings in the UK. Visually, it is extremely striking, and is also a fantastic operational facility, purpose-built for the preservation and storage of our nuclear records, as well as those from Caithness.

Nucleus will store records from all over the UK

The judges’ citation:

The judges unanimously felt that this was an impressive industrial building which created an ethereal and beautifully sculpted building. Security issues in the design of the landscape did not detract from the panel’s view that this was an excellent building. The relationship of the building to the historic context of the site and the adjacent wartime airfield are beautifully articulated, together with the references to the Caithness context of lochs and a difficult climate.

The unique £20 million facility opened last year and is now in the process of receiving records, photographs, plans and other data from NDA sites all over the UK. It already stores local historical archives associated with Caithness.

The material is stored in a series of secure pods and much of it will gradually be converted to digital format.

An exercise that will last at least 5 years is now under way to collect, assess and sift through many thousands of nuclear documents before transfer to the archive. These include plans, photographs, drawings and other records from diverse locations around the UK.

Nucleus also fulfils an important role for the future geological disposal facility (GDF), acting as a central repository for detailed waste records that must be safeguarded for many generations.

[Read more about the archive.](#)