

News story: Top accolade for nuclear record-keeping

A winning design for Nucleus (The Nuclear and Caithness Archives) © Tricia Malley Ross Gillespie www.broaddaylightltd.co.uk

'Place of Deposit' (PoD) status was granted by The National Archives at Kew (TNA) and National Records of Scotland in December 2017, on schedule, after a comprehensive assessment of all operational aspects at the £20 million facility near Wick. It is one of the largest repositories outside London to be accredited by the TNA.

This means Nucleus (The Nuclear and Caithness Archives) has met all the UK's stringent criteria for the safeguarding, preserving and cataloguing of important public information on behalf of the government.

Martin Robb, Programme Manager for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's (NDA) Information Governance Programme, which is responsible for records management, said:

Our specialist contractor, Restore Ltd, has worked incredibly hard to secure Place of Deposit status and we're extremely proud of their achievement.

The news comes just weeks after the facility's sleek, angular lines impressed judges in the annual Architects' Journal awards, collecting two of the top trophies: Editor's Choice and Public Building of the Year. Edinburgh-based Reiach and Hall Architects feature the stunning design on the home page of their website.

Nucleus, located next to Wick airport in Caithness, Scotland, opened its doors for business early in 2017 and a programme is currently under way to transfer records from all the NDA's sites across UK, estimated to take four years. This painstaking 'sift and lift' process requires millions of documents to be examined before being either destroyed or carefully indexed and packaged for the move north.

Eventually, decades-worth of NDA records, both digital and hard copy, will be housed at Nucleus where they will be available for ongoing research. Importantly, Nucleus is also the central repository for the vital waste records associated with delivering a geological disposal facility and deferred decommissioning.

Dounreay's photographic collection was the set of first nuclear records transferred to Nucleus, followed by the industry-wide epidemiological records.

Martin added:

With PoD status now secured, we can really begin the full-scale transfer of records. The collection from Harwell is next in line, followed closely by Dounreay records and then the stored material from Hinton House and other stores in Warrington.

Each collection of records requires a full programme of careful examination, destruction where appropriate – duplicates for example – and then indexing, packaging, transfer, preservation if required and cataloguing at Nucleus.

Sellafield alone has more than 130,000 boxes of archived records in off-site storage, plus material on site and in various offices. Magnox Ltd, with 12 sites, has a similar-sized collection in storage – estimated as stretching, if laid out, to more than 120km worth of paperwork. The number of electronic records held across the estate, meanwhile, is believed to number hundreds of millions.

[NDA archive: Nucleus \(the Nuclear and Caithness Archives\)](#)