

### Integrated Property Management with ARCHIBUS



**“The ease with which the software could be customised was impressive as was its compatible with our existing data structure”** - John Tomlinson, Property Information and Business Manager for Northamptonshire County Council

Faced with the problems of constantly juggling information from a large number of incompatible systems and databases, John Tomlinson decided to streamline Northamptonshire County Council’s (NCC) property management by taking on a single integrated solution that would address their current and future needs.

John Tomlinson is Property Information and Business Manager for County Property Services within the Business Management Services directorate at NCC. The Council’s buildings alone comprise over nine million square feet of space.

Operating from County Hall, Northampton, John’s principle role is the management of all County Property Services’ information and business systems. As part of his streamlining plans, he wanted a system that would be suitable for managing property records (Terrier plans), statutory inspections (Asbestos, Radon etc), condition surveys, a helpdesk, order processing and financial management of property budgets.

Furthermore, it would need to integrate with Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Geographical Information System (GIS) products as well as having the capability to interface with the Council’s financial software.

In the longer term, any system selected would have to have Web links within it. Also it would have to be easy to customise in order to deal with the requirements of the Department

for Education and Skills (DfES) Asset Management Plans (AMPs) for Schools—a statutory requirement.

“We wanted to choose a package that achieved the highest percentage fit to our existing data and one that was backed up by a large client base,” says John. “Our research of the market included visiting industry exhibitions to find out what systems were available and talking to their users. After reviewing a number of different products and suppliers, some of whom were invited to demonstrate their packages, ARCHIBUS and Mass were selected as the preferred supplier.

“Most importantly, it had the dynamic links with AutoCAD; this was essential for us as we already had CAD plan of our buildings and sites.” Other deciding factors were the large number of organisations already using the system and the fact that support would come from an established supplier.

The initial stages of implementing the new system included the transfer of the Council’s property data from the previous software into ARCHIBUS and the linking of CAD plans—a process facilitated by the new systems open database structure. This was followed by the development of AMP Condition Survey and Suitability modules in ARCHIBUS that enabled detailed information about the condition and suitability of all Council property to be collected, recorded and monitored in a rolling five– year programme.

ARCHIBUS now holds all relevant data on the condition of building elements, including structural, electrical and mechanical, internal and external finishes and playing fields for 353 education establishments. Information on the suitability of the existing educational premises, in line with DfES criteria, has also been incorporated into the ARCHIBUS database. Extracts from these two modules were used to produce the required periodic returns of data to the DfES in real time.

