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DOUGHNUT GETS ROYAL SEAL OF APPROVAL

Her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, officially opened GCHQ's new accommodation on Thursday 25 March. After a short tour of the building, during which the royal visitors met a wide range of staff and others responsible for the design and construction, Her Majesty unveiled a plaque commemorating the event.

A spokeswoman for Buckingham Palace said: "*Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh were very impressed by this state-of-the-art intelligence centre. They were particularly interested to see how the building contributes to GCHQ's effectiveness in delivering intelligence and information assurance for the nation.*"

A GCHQ spokesman added: "*This has been a memorable day not only for GCHQ, but also the IAS consortium, which is responsible for the building, and Chris Johnson, the architect. The royal couple previously visited GCHQ's Oakley site in 1995 so they were able to appreciate fully the improvements in our working environment and the business and cultural benefits which we are deriving from the move to a purpose-built single site headquarters.*"

Staff from GCHQ began moving into the new accommodation – commonly referred to as the Doughnut - in September 2003 and it will be fully occupied by early summer 2004. At present over half the staff - some 2400 - have already moved into the building and transition arrangements have gone very smoothly.

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