

Refurbishment of Foss House and Mallard House and Construction of New Hub Building Kingspool, York, United Kingdom

Challenges

- To implement the recommendations of the Lyons Report, where the Kingspool premises were to be refurbished to increase the occupancy levels to accommodate the relocation of 270 DEFRA staff from London to York.
- To incorporate within the refurbishment an increased reception area and ground floor business suite along with the construction of a new social hub building (restaurant/informal meeting space). All of which to be achieved whilst the majority of existing staff remained insitu.
- Planning decants and movement of staff within the buildings to suit both the building works programme and the continuing smooth working of the many DEFRA sub-departments.
- To improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon footprint.
- Sourcing of alternative premises for and funding the required decant of a single sub-department for the entire contract period to provide sufficient "swing space" to enable the site works to be carried out.

Solutions

- Re-negotiation of the remaining 15 years of the lease, together with a capital contribution from the landlord to reflect the enhanced value of the premises.
- Increasing density of occupation by the implementation of "smart working" practices, including the provision of only 80 percent of workspaces of the total planned occupancy.
- Creation of a mainly naturally ventilated, flexible, open plan working environment throughout.
- Shared social space and informal meeting areas within the general working areas.
- Upgraded energy efficiency to deliver enhanced environmental conditions and comfort for the work force.

Results

- Turning a liability into an asset and an increase in business efficiency.
- Major reduction in running costs due to the relocation of staff from London and the resulting reduction in office space requirement there.
- An increase in available staff occupancy from 850 to 1120.
- A change in culture for staff with new ways of working and flexible use of space.
- Although not part of the initial project brief, "BREEAM Excellence" was achieved to both the refurbishment and new build "hub" building, resulting in a Green Apple Award 2009.
- By introducing an innovative pain/gain mechanism for dealing with value engineering the project, £1.3 million of savings were generated for the client.



Reflections

- The provision of a totally open plan modern working environment with shared breakout spaces has provided the opportunity for much improved communication and fertilisation of ideas across the many DEFRA sub-departments.
- The project has delivered a sustainability benchmark beyond the original expectations for a refurbishment of this type and within the original budget.
- The project has delivered sufficient additional workspaces to enable a continuing rationalisation of the DEFRA estate, as recommended by the Lyons Report.