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Vol 31 No 1 2020

FORMERLY NORTHERN BUILDER



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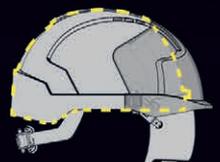
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The safety cell concept prevents ricocheting debris travelling up the eyewear and impacting the scalp.



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LD - LATERAL DEFORMATION



-40°C TESTED



EN50365 ELECTRICAL INSULATION  
AC 1000V or DC 1500V

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Glenn Robinson, General Manager and Rebecca Moore, Business Development Executive are pictured collecting the award from Paul Beaman, Managing Director at Keyline.

## TOBERMORE SCOOP AWARD

» Tobermore was delighted to attend the recent Keyline 2020 Conference, held at the International Conference Centre, Telford. Keyline is the largest supplier of civils, drainage and heavy building materials to the UK construction industry. The conference culminated in a gala dinner and awards ceremony where Tobermore is proud to announce that it won an award

for ‘Business Growth.’ Commenting on the win, David Henderson, Managing Director at Tobermore said: “This award is an incredible achievement in our first year of trading with Keyline, and a fantastic recognition for the team at Tobermore, as this award was voted for by Keyline staff”.

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**www.tobermore.co.uk**

## NI APPRENTICESHIP WEEK 2020

» Splashed across the social media pages of companies and associations throughout the first week of February, the first-ever Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Week has certainly made an impact. Speaking during the launch of Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Week 2020, Deputy Secretary of DfE Heather Cousins said: “Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Week provides the opportunity for everyone involved in apprenticeships, or interested in finding out more about apprenticeships, to come together during a week-long programme of apprenticeship events and activity.” With

information evenings, competitions and higher education open days, the events had something for everyone across the entire country. Setting aside some time to encourage young people, from all backgrounds, to consider an alternative path to their career has been very well received, with events reporting record numbers of attendees. The week concludes as many companies prepare to open their doors to applications for apprenticeship opportunities in 2020 – and if the events are anything to go by, there will definitely be record numbers hoping for a place.



The newly formed NI Executive must set a cost-effective policy path to decarbonisation of the regions infrastructure and building stock.

## RICS: DECARBONISING NI

» With Stormont seemingly back in action, RICS has pointed out that politicians must now address the UK’s toughened up net zero 2050 target, for which Northern Ireland will be expected to up its ante considerably. As carbon emissions are attributable not only to the operational use of built assets, but also through their construction, retrofitting provides an opportunity to achieve significant embodied carbon savings through re-use rather than re-build. Retrofitting Northern Ireland’s

existing housing stock is a critical milestone on the cost-effective path to decarbonisation. The Executive must commit to sustained funding and a package of financial incentive mechanisms for retrofitting across both low income and ‘able to pay’ households, drive standards and regulation, and must

support industry in delivering the robust pipeline of skills required to undertake this challenge. In such, the Northern Ireland Executive should deliver energy efficiency improvements as a long-term infrastructure priority investment.

**T: +44 (0)28 9592 1101**  
**www.rics.org**

The newly formed NI Executive must set a cost-effective policy path to decarbonisation of the regions infrastructure and building stock.

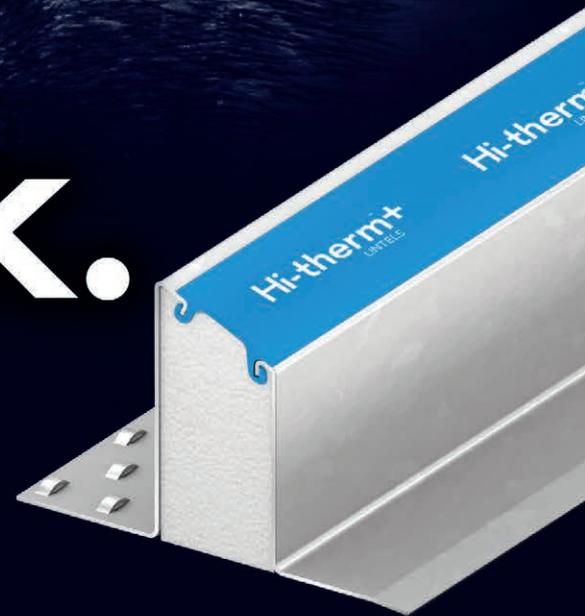
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LINTELS

BY

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(L-R) Steve Underwood from Colmore Tang, Damien Siviter from SevenCapital, Stuart Millichamp from Colmore Tang with Seamus McKeague from Creagh Concrete.

## CREAGH CONCRETE COMPLETES £8M LUXURY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

❏ Toomebridge headquartered concrete products manufacturer Creagh Concrete has completed an £8m 17-storey premium residential development project, St Martin’s Place, in Birmingham city centre in partnership with Colmore Tang Construction for SevenCapital.

Privately owned by the McKeague family, the company has grown significantly in the past two years to now employ over 700 staff, including 300 at its primary location. Creagh Concrete invested £1m in new offices to accommodate recent growth, with turnover expected to grow to £200m in the next few years and direct employment to increase to 1,000 in 2020. Seamus McKeague, chief executive of Creagh Concrete said: “This is a proud moment for our company as we successfully complete

a major project in Birmingham following a seven-month installation period.” “In recent years we have moved from being just a concrete and materials supplier to a specialist subcontractor and this has opened up new opportunities.”  
**T: +44 (0)28 7965 0500**  
**E: info@creaghconcrete.com**  
**www.creaghconcrete.co.uk**



## HERON BROS FIRST TO RETAIN PLATINUM AWARD

❏ Investors in People is the international standard for people management, defining what it takes to lead, support and manage people effectively to achieve sustainable results. Underpinning the standard is the Investors in People framework, reflecting the latest workplace trends, essential skills and effective structures required to outperform in any industry.

By retaining the highest possible IIP status, platinum, Heron Bros has demonstrated that the company and its people are going above and beyond to ensure their on-going success. This achievement demonstrates the organisation’s commitment to high performance through good people management. Grainne O’Kane, HR Manager at Heron Bros reflected on the global accolade:

“This prestigious award is only possible due to the valuable work carried out by all Heron staff in all work areas, each and every day. We are all justifiably proud of this award and continue to progress towards the future wholly committed to the values of the founding Heron Brothers.”

**www.heronbros.com**  
**www.investorsinpeople.com**

## NORTHSTONE SUPPORTS YOUNG FARMERS

❏ Northstone Materials, Northern Ireland’s leading construction materials producer, has partnered up with the largest rural youth network in the country, Young Farmers’



Robert Smyth from Randalstown YFC and Jonathan Gault, Area Sales Manager at Northstone Materials.

Clubs of Ulster. Through the partnership, YFCU and Northstone are excited to not only promote the “Build It” and “Soil Assessment” club competitions, but they are also committed to working in collaboration to support and grow the Farm Safety Programme.

Jonathan Gault, Area Sales Manager for Northstone Materials, commented: “As a company, Northstone Materials has an unwavering commitment to ethical business practices and we uphold the highest standards when it comes to health and safety, making the YFCU Farm Safety Programme an ideal programme for us to support.”

**www.northstonematerials.com**



# Show what you're made of

BUILDEX IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL FACETS OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TO...

**M**arketing your brand or product and generating new leads can be a problematic process. Let's be honest, people generally don't like to be cold-called, and if you push the door too hard you risk having it slammed in your face. So, what's the solution? The answer is BUILDEX, a festival of construction and networking that is an integral part of a multi-industry trade show encompassing electrical, plumbing and fit-out. BUILDEX 2020 takes place September 9- 10 at the stunning Eikon Exhibition Centre, Northern Ireland's largest events campus

and home to the Balmoral Show. BUILDEX attracts visitors from across the NI construction industry, including building contractors and sub-contractors, architectural and design firms, housebuilders and developers, government departments, housing groups and associations, education/training, as well as merchants & distribution. For anyone interested in showcasing their latest products or increasing brand awareness, this is a captive audience. For anyone in the trade this is a gilt-edged opportunity to keep apprised of the

latest trends, technologies and innovations. BUILDEX 2020 will feature world class exhibitors and brands, with on-hand advice and demonstrations. You can also take advantage of special offers and free giveaways, shoot the breeze with like-minded individuals, or watch (and quite possibly laugh) at the competitive but fun-filled Apprentice Skills Challenges. With record numbers expected at BUILDEX 2020, can you and your company afford not to have a presence? **For more information, check out [www.northernbuilder.co.uk/events/buildex/](http://www.northernbuilder.co.uk/events/buildex/)**



**BUILDEX**  
TRADE EVENT  
BELFAST

EIKON EXHIBITION  
CENTRE, SPRUCEFIELD

**WED**  
**9 SEPT**  
4PM - 9PM

**THURS**  
**10 SEPT**  
9:30AM - 4PM

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KEYSTONE LINTELS OFFERS THE CHANCE TO WIN SOME VERY HIGHLY SOUGHT-AFTER TICKETS...

# Score your Hi-therm+ Lintels

Keystone's award-winning Hi-therm+ lintels offer an innovative solution to improving SAP calculations and meeting Part F regulations. Specifiers have been given the opportunity to tackle thermal bridging and convert to Hi-therm+ to be in with the chance of winning a pair of tickets to the Six Nations. Visit [www.keystonelintels.com/hi-thermsixnations](http://www.keystonelintels.com/hi-thermsixnations) and upload a set of plans for a free quote and entry to the competition. 1 conversion = 1 entry.

## WHY HI-THERM+?

The Hi-therm+ Lintel provides a low-cost solution for reduced carbon emissions and is up to five times more thermally efficient than a standard steel lintel. Designers are now facing the challenge of enhanced energy efficiency within SAP which forces them to address thermal bridging in all its forms. While there are a number of options available to boost efficiency, none offer the impact and cost efficiency within SAP of the Hi-therm Lintel.

## A FABRIC FIRST APPROACH

Lintels are, in most cases, the most significant thermal bridges due to the fact that traditional style steel lintels interrupt the line of insulation with a continuous piece of highly conductive steel.

“The use of this unique Hi-therm+ lintel in place of standard steel lintels can lead to an 80% reduction in thermal bridging through the lintels.”



The innovative design of the Hi-therm+ Lintel, utilises a rigid polymer thermal insulator as an effective thermal break, but incorporates a steel inner and external leaf so it is installed in exactly the same way as a standard lintel. The use of this unique Hi-therm+ lintel in place of standard steel lintels can lead to an 80% reduction in thermal bridging through the lintels. By making such large savings on thermal bridging, designers gain the flexibility to trim back on other more expensive options

(such as wider cavities) yet still comply with the latest building regulations. To design efficiently for Part F, it is important that energy assessors use independently calculated Psi values or manufacturer calculated Psi values. Keystone's online Psi value calculator tool enables designers and SAP assessors to obtain a Psi value with a few clicks of a button.

**T: +44 (0)28 8676 2184**  
**[www.keystonelintels.com/hi-therm-lintels](http://www.keystonelintels.com/hi-therm-lintels)**

Win Six Nations tickets with a conversion to Hi-therm+ Lintels

Convert now



Hi-therm+ LINTELS

BY Keystone



INDUSTRY-LEADING CONFERENCE SHOWCASES THE BIMCERT PROJECT LED BY BELFAST METROPOLITAN COLLEGE...

# Building for the future

We may not see eye-to-eye over Brexit, but representatives from Europe's industrial and political arenas were united in their support of an innovative digital construction platform introduced by Belfast Metropolitan College. BIMcert (Building Information Modelling) is a qualification that provides essential digital technology skills for the construction workforce. A key tool for reducing the carbon footprint in the construction sector, BIM is the blueprint for an increasingly environmentally conscious industry.

At the recent 'BIMcert Digital Skills to Reduce the Energy Footprint in the Built Environment', an international conference staged at Titanic, Belfast, speakers from across Europe took turns to highlight how the BIMcert has empowered the construction sector.

Ms Maja Marija Nahod, Assistant Minister at the Croatian Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning, described independent initiatives like BIMcert as essential, championing the need for common standards.

Collaboration is at the core of BIMcert. There are currently seven European partners on the BIMcert project, including Technological University, Dublin; Instituto Superior Tecnico, Portugal; and Energy Institute Hrvoje Pozar, Croatia. Marie Therese McGivern, Chief Executive and Principal at Belfast Metropolitan College, said: "We are justifiably proud to be the first Further Education college in the UK to lead a H2020 project. We are here to celebrate with all the partners an amazing project delivering certification in Building Information Modelling."

The noteworthy progress made



Pictured at the BIMcert Digital Skills to Reduce the Energy Footprint in the Built Environment conference at Titanic, Belfast (from left): Paul McCormack, Belfast Met BIMcert Programme Manager; Ms Maja Marija Nahod, Croatian Assistant Minister for Construction; Martin Lennon, Managing Director at O'Hare & McGovern; Marie Therese McGivern, Chief Executive at Belfast Metropolitan College; Gordon Sutherland, Head of Sector EASME; and Dr James Harty, Copenhagen School of Design and Technology.

is, however, just the beginning. "It requires innovative approaches to training and upskilling people for this new paradigm," added Marie Therese. "BIMcert has illustrated how we can achieve this for the partners, students, business, and industry. However, the construction industry is the lowest ranked economic sector in terms of digital uptake in Europe."

Applicable to every aspect of a construction project, BIMcert has an ardent supporter in the shape of Martin Lennon, Managing Director at O'Hare & McGovern. His company's employees are currently under-going BIMcert training, and Martin believes BIM is now part of his company's DNA.

Reflecting on the event in Belfast, Gordon Sutherland, Head of Sector for Buildings and Heating/Cooling at the European Commission's Executive Agency for SME's (EASME), added his endorsement: "BIMcert has been instrumental in developing bespoke training experiences which allow the student to develop a CV highlighting newly-acquired skills attained in a European context."

The conference at Titanic, Belfast, demonstrated the importance of building

a qualified workforce in order to reach the EU's energy and climate targets. "Improving the skills of middle and senior level professionals, and blue collar workers in the area of sustainable, energy efficient construction, is of key importance," added Paul McCormack, Belfast Met's Innovation Manager and BIMcert Programme Manager. "Our BIMcert training platform is ready for use, and this is your chance to avail of free BIMcert training which can enhance your career."

**Check out BIMcert at [www.energybimcert.eu](http://www.energybimcert.eu) and the platform on [www.platform.energybimcert.eu](http://www.platform.energybimcert.eu)**



Maja Marija Nahod, Assistant Minister at the Croatian Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning, speaking at the recent BIMcert event at Titanic, Belfast.

# MacBlair

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## Branch Network

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T 028 9448 1352

### Belfast Rosetta

72 Knockbreda Road  
BT6 0JB  
T 028 9064 1235

### Craigavon

42A Seagoe Ind Estate  
BT63 5QE  
T 028 3833 5723

### L'Derry

Unit 2B Altnagelvin Ind Estate  
BT47 2ED  
T 028 7134 8348

### Ballymoney

24 Ballybrakes Road  
BT53 6LQ  
T 028 2766 4742

### Belfast MacBlair Paint

93 York Road  
BT15 3GY  
T 028 9075 1217

### Downpatrick

20 Church Street  
BT30 6ER  
T 028 4461 6325

### Douglas Isle of Man

Unit 5 Middle River Ind Estate  
IM2 1AL  
T 016 2467 1118

### Bangor

70 Balloo Road  
BT19 7PG  
T 028 9127 1792

### Coleraine MacBlair Plumbing

5 Loguestown Ind Estate  
BT52 2NS  
T 028 7034 4422

### Eglinton

15 Killylane Road  
BT47 3DW  
T 028 7181 0233

### Belfast Boucher

4 Balmoral Road  
BT12 6QA  
T 028 9055 1379

### Coleraine

5 Loguestown Ind Estate  
BT52 2NS  
T 028 7034 4751

### Larne

52 Circular Road  
BT40 3AB  
T 028 2827 2031

### Belfast Duncrue

42-44 Duncrue Crescent  
BT3 9BW  
T 028 9037 0357

### Cookstown

Sandholes Road  
BT80 9AR  
T 028 8676 2211

### Lisburn

38 Young Street  
Lisburn BT27 5EB  
T 028 9262 7499

## MacBlair Civils

**Belfast Boucher**

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**Cookstown**

**Eglinton**



**Antrim**

**Bangor**

**Belfast Boucher**

**Coleraine**

**Cookstown**

**Eglinton**

**Larne**



NI BUILDER SPOKE TO LAWRENCE MURDOCK, MANAGER AT THE MACBLAIR ROSETTA BRANCH...

## Rooted in success

Experience, dedication and quality are three values you can expect to find when you visit MacBlair's Rosetta branch. Conveniently located on the Knockbreda Road in Belfast, it's a popular site for MacBlair customers. Incidentally, it's also a location very close to the heart of branch manager, Lawrence Murdock, whose grandfather first opened the site as a builder's yard for his construction company back in 1938. The location was kept in the family by his uncles, and Lawrence entered the fray in June of 1982. Peter Woods Ltd continued to thrive and grow into a very successful and well-respected business until being acquired by the Grafton group (MacNaughton Blair) in October 2002 - an acquisition that was very valuable in the growth and establishment of MacBlair as we know it today. Lawrence took over as Branch Manager in January 2003, a role and a challenge he was, "extremely proud to

take on, especially as it was the role the late David Woods, a huge influence in my working life, felt I was well able for. The business was built around quality products, competitive prices and above all - a very high level of customer service, something I am very proud that myself and my dedicated team have been able to maintain."

At MacBlair Rosetta, you can guarantee you will have the opportunity to speak to industry professionals and get some expert advice about stocked products and their uses. Lawrence compliments his staff, "A big part of the success of this branch is the vast wealth of experience and knowledge the staff have. We have several members who have been here over 25 years and a few like myself approaching 40 years. That in itself has helped to maintain that family feel the business still has even as a PLC."

The Rosetta branch is enriched with a

fascinating history and well loved by all of its regular customers. However, it is by no means stuck in the past - it has developed with the years and adjusted to a new era of construction requirements. There are no signs of slowing down for the branch, with Lawrence promising, "many more successful and hopefully exciting years at MacBlair Rosetta as the business continues to change and adapt to our customers' needs. I enjoy it now as much as I did when I started all those years ago."

No individual branch can shine without the people who make it possible. Lawrence concludes with praise, "I would like to take the opportunity to thank all my team here at Rosetta for all their hard work and also the greater MacBlair team that helps to make this business the success it is, and a special thank you to our loyal customers for their continued support."

72 Knockbreda Road, Belfast, BT6 0JB  
T: +44 (0)28 9064 1235  
[www.macblair.com](http://www.macblair.com)





L-R: Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Officer, Geoff Somerville, Brian Cunningham, Chairman of BCNI Fire Safety Panel, Lorna Stimpson, LABC, Lord Mayor Cllr Mealla Campbell, Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council and Tom Lavery, Chairman BCNI

THE TWO DAY EVENT SAW OVER 400 DELEGATES TREATED TO A VAST AND DIVERSE RANGE OF PRESENTATIONS...

# Fire Safety Conference 2020

With the first week of February came the return of the popular Fire Safety Conference to the Armagh City Hotel. As ever, the main function of the conference was to share fire safety knowledge and to promote expertise throughout Northern Ireland.

“The conference is, as always, a great place to debate, discuss and raise awareness of fire safety” were the opening comments made by the Fire Safety Panel Chairman, Brian Cunningham: “Here’s hoping that everyone takes away with them, a better understanding of fire safety.”

Year on year, the Building Control Northern Ireland Fire Safety Panel strives to raise standards among construction professionals and pushes for fire safety awareness to be considered at all times. The conference has had a steady

growth over the years, and with 2020 came its 24th birthday and a total number of 440 delegates over the two days. They were all treated to a series of speaker presentations from Holland, England, Scotland, Wales, Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The speakers represented a wide range of backgrounds including:

- Academia
- Research
- Testing
- Fire safety engineers
- Fire fighters
- Consultants
- LABC representatives
- Smoke control specialists
- Specialist trainers
- Virtual reality consultants.

Each of the speakers drew on vast reservoirs of knowledge gained from research, case studies, specialist study and,

above all, experience in their respective specialist disciplines and fields.

Never far, however, from the minds of speakers and delegates alike, were the dreadful scenes following the Grenfell disaster, and the subsequent findings of the Hackett report which has had a massive impact across the industry and how everyone views fire safety.

With the focus this year on ‘Promoting Fire Safety’ some of the topics that were covered included:

- Building Fire Safety – Practical Advice
- International Fire Safety Standards
- Building a Safer Future
- Fire Testing & Reviewing Large Scale Testing
- Smoke Ventilation Systems
- Fire Engineering – Large Outdoor Events

# FIRE SAFETY CONFERENCE 2020



- Raising the Bar - Competence
- Human Behaviour & Reducing the Risk for Older People
- Personal Evacuation Plans

The Conference was also attended by 20 trade stands, all providing up-to-date information on the latest developments and innovations in passive and reactive firefighting.

Some of the speakers and delegates offered excellent feedback:

“My first time here, I was delighted and honoured to be asked to do a presentation and I will be back next year as a delegate!” one of the speakers, Simon Sandland Taylor, said after the conference.

Gary Strong, who delivered an excellent presentation on ‘International Fire Safety Standards’ said: “I attend Fire Safety Conferences regularly and this is undoubtedly the best by far, I will definitely be back next year.” Luckily for Gary, plans are already in place for 2021 following the resounding success of this year’s conference.

**For more information on the Fire Safety Conference, e-mail [firesafetypanel@gmail.com](mailto:firesafetypanel@gmail.com)**





**Mark Spence, the new Assistant Director of the Construction Employers Federation.**

---

“Probably one of the key agenda items would be the need for an improvement in procurement.”

## IN FOCUS - MARK SPENCE

CEF'S NEWLY APPOINTED ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, MARK SPENCE, GIVES A CANDID ASSESSMENT OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND HIS FEDERATION'S ONGOING ROLE...

## 'Do it once, do it right'

**O**n Saturday, January 11, the Northern Ireland Assembly returned to work at Stormont following a three-years hiatus. The timing of the decision to return to devolved government was an opportune one for Mark Spence as he began his tenure as Assistant Director of the Construction Employers Federation.

New year, new decade, new government finally in place - now would appear to be the perfect time to give voice to the feelings and frustrations of a construction industry that's been largely left to fend for itself. "Obviously, we're delighted to see the Assembly back. Not only have we had no ministers and no decisions, but also a lack of committees, with a lot of expenditure not properly scrutinized. There have been a few issues that the audit office and others have highlighted, Mark observes.

"Construction is in many ways a barometer for the economy. We have felt the cold draught here from private investors nervous about investing in Northern Ireland with Brexit undecided. Anything being built now was probably decided three, four, five years ago. There's an upturn now, and although many members have faced significant pressures over the last three difficult years, the companies that have streamlined and adapted have come out the other side stronger, more efficient and effective."

So what are the areas of most concern to CEF members? "Probably one of the

key agenda items would be the need for an improvement in procurement. Rather than having a large number of individual bodies, each looking after their own patch, we could have a centralised procurement that draws in all the good expertise that there undoubtedly is, pulling that together rather than the patchwork quilt we currently have. Northern Ireland's not a big place, and if Birmingham can be run by roughly 100 councillors, we certainly don't need seven, eight, or nine procurement divisions to run the place."

Unwieldy, overly-bureaucratic, with a pedestrian decision-making process, the current system quite clearly doesn't work. "Centralisation would also speed up the process, because a lot of procurements over the last three years have started, stalled, been challenged, cancelled, started again. Do it once, do it right, and the industry will work with the clients. "We don't compare favourably with our friends in Scotland and England in terms of procurement timescales and value for money, and yet we're a smaller government area. Procurement should be about collaboration, but it's far too often about them and us. For the good of everyone we would be calling for more of a partnership, more centralised control over procurement, streamlining the policies and greater understanding. Our members are very keen to engage with all the right departments to make sure that they can learn lessons...that we can learn lessons together."

SIGNIFICANT SPENDING ON OUR INFRASTRUCTURE IS ESSENTIAL TO AVOID THROWING GOOD MONEY AFTER BAD...

# Not fit for purpose

**C**EF members are realists. They understand better than most that there is no instant cure to the current malaise. They also recognise just how vital funding is to revitalising the key areas supported by the construction industry. “Funding is a huge issue. Areas like education and health are not just short of money, they are no longer fit for purpose. It’s like a leaky bucket. It’s okay calling for more water, but if it’s just pouring out the holes you’re serving nobody and wasting taxpayers’ money. It needs to be better spent.

“Our first call would be to say ‘let’s make the system work’. Procurement’s part of the problem, but so too is duplication of services, our education system, a health system that’s completely broken. We have similar, and in many cases higher funding levels per head than anywhere else in the UK, and yet we have the worst waiting lists. “A large part of what is required will involve construction. It will require aggregation onto single sites of specialisms for health, reconfiguration of sites for schools. It’s a structural issue that won’t be solved quickly, but we’re hoping the mandatory coalition will get off their political soap boxes now and do what they promised they would do...work together.”

## WATER WORKS (THAT DON'T)

The antiquated nature of much of the infrastructure is undoubtedly one of the great inhibitors to progress. Even the best laid plans cannot circumvent some inadequacies. As a Board member of a local housing association and staunch advocate of the social housing movement, Mark, like many others, is aware of how demands beyond the normal remit of a contractor are dampening members’ enthusiasm. With most of Northern Ireland Water’s

Northern Ireland's water infrastructure is antiquated and crying out for investment.



network already at capacity, something needs to be done, and fast. “We’re glad to see that the agenda has gathered some momentum and by the time talks resumed at Stormont alongside health, water was being mentioned in the same breath. We also noted the Infrastructure Minister Nichola Mallon very quickly ruling out water rates, but not ruling out increases in rates. “What worries us is that the current infrastructure doesn’t support much more, if any major housing development. We’ve been working with our members for the last two years, but it’s come to a real crisis point. They are coming to our committees and telling us they cannot get the housing development done because they’re required to build a water treatment works if it’s to go ahead. In some cases

you’re asking a small family business to build a fairly sophisticated water works...and operate it!”

It’s not just the public sector that’s threatened. One of Belfast’s highest profile projects could potentially be under threat. “I read recently where The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society said after the Tribeca project was announced that it was all well and good, but there’s no plumbing in that area, no water system that will hold these houses, apartments, and shops. “Significant development is very exciting for Belfast, but it is also limited as to where it can happen. There is an upper limit when it comes to water, and we’re nearly at that point. Somebody needs to seriously start talking about funding water infrastructure.”

“It’s like a leaky bucket. It’s okay calling for more water, but if it’s just pouring out the holes you’re serving nobody and wasting taxpayers’ money.”

THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY NEEDS TO BE PROACTIVE IF IT IS TO RECRUIT THE BEST CANDIDATES FROM A HIGHLY-COMPETITIVE TALENT POOL...

# Construction and the digital age

It's not a case of 'times they are a changing' - it's already happened.

Construction may still be battling to shed its antiquated image, but in reality it is now a highly digital industry, extremely innovative, and so far removed from many people's perception.

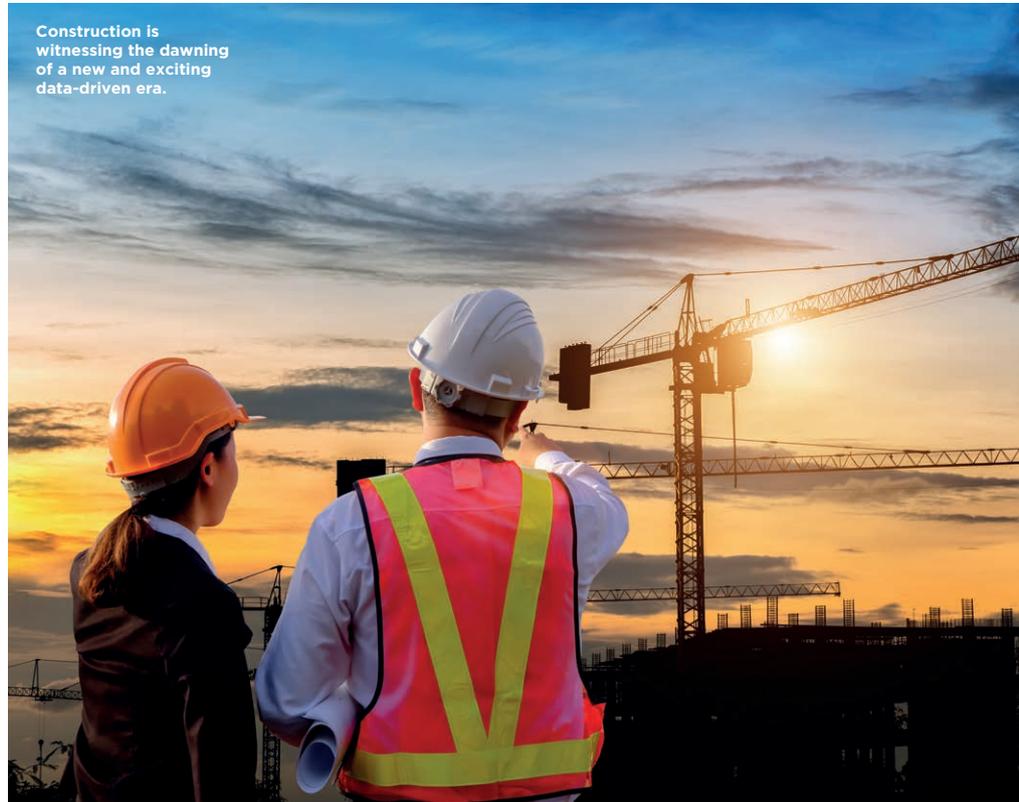
"There's a brilliant field of talent out there to tap into, but the perception is still hole diggers and guys with their jeans halfway down their backsides, whistling at girls going past. At CEF, we recognise that construction is and has modernised, our members are modernising, and we are no longer the cavemen of the commercial world.

"A lot of construction is now digital. The way we do business has changed. BIM is the way forward for large projects, and it's going to filter down. Our members are now recruiting IT graduates as often as they're recruiting Quantity Surveyors."

The task facing construction companies is to present themselves as a real alternative to the increasing number of tech firms. Once considered a leftfield career choice, IT is now the norm, accepted by schools and parents.

"Maybe we have to some degree shot ourselves in the foot by talking the industry down over the past few years. It has been a very difficult period and I suppose those negative messages, consciously or sub-consciously, get absorbed by careers teachers, and particularly parents. Maybe we've fallen into the trap of saying there's no work out there. There is."

In a country that always took such pride in its skilled artisans, Northern Ireland is currently suffering a shortage of tradespeople. "Bricklayers and joiners are like gold dust, you just can't get them. Young people need to be reminded that those are viable career choices, long-term career choices.



Construction is witnessing the dawning of a new and exciting data-driven era.

"There's a brilliant field of talent out there to tap into, but the perception is still hole diggers and guys with their jeans halfway down their backsides, whistling at girls going past."

Young people can and have gone into those trades and become business owners very quickly.

"This year, part of my goal at CEF is to engage much more on an educational outreach, working with the likes of CITB who are set up specifically for that. A lot of our members are very good at liaising with local schools and advising them. However, there's a reluctance in some parts of the education apparatus to engage with construction. They don't see it as quite the proper route for their children.

"I also want to reach out to special interest groups like Women'sTec, a great organisation trying to get girls and women into what are traditionally male trades. It's a cultural mindset change, but discussions we've had with business leaders around our tables over the last few weeks show they are completely open to it, and would welcome the diversity. That, in turn, will help change the perception of the construction industry and make it more attractive to young people."

THE GENERATION GAME THAT'S BECOME A REAL CONCERN IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY...

# Line of succession

Construction in Northern Ireland is chock-a-block with experienced and extremely knowledgeable people who have devoted their lives to the industry. The problem lies at the other end of the age spectrum.

Family-run construction firms are still the norm here, and one of the issues keeping members awake at night is the question of succession. When grey hair, or no hair is all the rage, you know you've reason for concern.

"There's a reason we run courses on succession planning at CEF. There are still so many family-run businesses in construction. A business is only as good as its leadership, and it's all about skills and future-proofing. Drawing younger people to the industry, and just as importantly, retaining them, is essential. Everything in construction has got a lot slicker, a lot leaner, and it's not going to be grey heads doing a lot of that, it's smart kids who know their way around software."

CEF is keen to take the lead when it comes to selling the construction industry to the future generations, and embracing all things environmental will be an integral part of that strategy. "The green agenda is increasingly prevalent, it's now demanded by many clients. They're wanting to work with companies who fit with their values. It's a role CEF wants to take a lead in, assisting our members to get there and helping them to go green."

Mark Spence is only a matter of weeks into his new role, but has he had the opportunity to set goals for his tenure at CEF. "What I most want to achieve out of this role is to see CEF supporting our members to secure a sustainable future for their businesses. That means working very closely with the government, knowing what their plans are, and being realistic about those plans.



Keeping it in the family has always been the norm in Northern Ireland's construction industry.

"CEF is keen to take the lead when it comes to selling the construction industry to the future generations, and embracing all things environmental will be an integral part of that strategy."

"We just need to see some direction of travel, a little bit of optimism goes a long way. We'd rather see a secure smaller budget than figures that change year in, year out. That's why we're delighted to hear that multi-year budgets are coming again. We've been living from hand to mouth and that's not sustainable. Construction doesn't work in one-year budgets "CEF is ultimately a members'

organisation. All our committees decide what our policies and priorities are. Our members give of their own time and it's not an ivory tower approach. We listen and will continue to do so."

The Construction Employers Federation (CEF) has been called the voice of the industry. Mark Spence is determined to ensure that voice continues to be heard.



A £12.7M REDEVELOPMENT OF NORTH-WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE SPORTS CAMPUS WITH DOUBLE INDOOR SWIMMING POOL, COUPLED WITH OTHER NEW SPORTS FACILITIES...

## Kalwall by Structura

The redevelopment scheme was designed by architects Samuel Stevenson & Sons who specified the use of Kalwall, from Structura, for the pool area elevation and sports hall to minimise glare and maximise natural daylight. During the day, Kalwall enhances daylight and distributes it internally without shadows and glare, while at night it creates a welcoming glow with its scallop-shaped backlighting. The unique ability to transmit large amounts of usable light with relatively low levels of solar heat gain means less radiant energy transmitted, and this, coupled with diffusion, does away with the hot spots and glare. With increased natural daylight and resistance to solar

Kalwall is highly resistant to impact, making it excellent for use in schools, pools, gymnasias, offices and other public buildings.

gain, energy-consuming artificial lighting and air-conditioning costs are dramatically reduced.

Kalwall is highly resistant to impact, making it excellent for use in schools, pools, gymnasias, offices and other public buildings. It is particularly popular in the sports and leisure sectors and commonly used around swimming pools and sports halls. Glare on a swimming pool surface is a common concern - with dazzling rippled sunlight bouncing off the surface which can cause discomfort to swimmers. In addition, it can be a serious safety concern as lifeguards can struggle to see swimmers may be in need of assistance. In sports halls, it's important that there is an even distribution of light so that players can

distinguish markings on the floor as well as easily spotting balls and other equipment.

Kalwall is a popular choice for projects where performance, long life cycle and low maintenance are required, coupled with an aesthetic finish. The lightweight system reduces the need for supporting structures while offering the highest protection in terms of wind-borne debris and resistance to impact, abrasion and point loads.



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**Belfast  
City Council**

Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre.

# Belfast City Council's Leisure Transformation Programme

LISNASHARRAGH LEISURE CENTRE  
BROOK LEISURE CENTRE



Brook Leisure Centre.

HERON BROS ENSURES BELFAST CITY COUNCIL'S LEISURE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME STAYS...

## AHEAD OF THE GAME

**H**eron Bros continues to play a key role in helping Belfast City Council achieve its Leisure Transformation Programme goals.

The award-winning construction company has recently completed two state-of-the-art leisure centres as part of a £105m investment in Belfast's leisure services. It says much about Heron Bros' expertise in this sector of the industry that the projects - one in the east of the city, the other in the west - opened their doors to the public within 48-hours of each other. Although they share the same sporting DNA, both complexes have their own very unique selling points. Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre, formerly the Robinson Centre on the Montgomery Road, becomes the leading Aquatic Centre in Belfast with an unrivalled eight-lane swimming pool. Brook Leisure Centre, on a site close to the former Brook Activity Centre in Twinbrook, places the emphasis on 'outdoor leisure provision', with no fewer than eight 3G pitches.

"There is no comparable size of investment in publicly owned leisure facilities anywhere else in the UK," said Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services at Belfast City Council. "It is a real statement of intent by Council and demonstrates our commitment to improve the health and well-being of our citizens."

For Heron Bros to complete two projects simultaneously required a substantial investment in manpower. "Our site resources

ramped up to over 100 staff per project when in their busiest phase," said Heron Bros Senior Contracts Manager, John Paul Higgins.

Building Information Modelling (BIM) has quickly become the construction industry's go-to resource. The technology, embraced by Heron Bros, proved invaluable, particularly in the early stages of both the Brook and Lisnasharragh projects.

"We have a policy in place at Heron Bros where at the start of any project we sit down and look at 'lessons learned' from previous works of a similar type," JP explained. "BIM has been a great addition and was fantastic early on with planning and coordination. The more complex the project, the more benefit you get from it.

"It is an important visual tool that enables you to view a very accurate walk through of the project. It also flags up clashes and issues, things you can catch off-site and resolve. BIM also came into its own in relation to choosing products and their finish. The design team could easily demonstrate different colour selections to the client, giving them detailed images to consider when making their decisions. BIM is also very effective as a collaborative tool for the main contractor at internal meetings, enabling any issues to be addressed and opinions sought.

"The client was able to use the design model when accessing the environment that staff would be working in. These walk through tools proved beneficial when making key decisions, such as life guard positions."



Brook Leisure Centre outdoor pitches.



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Lisnasharragh pool facilities

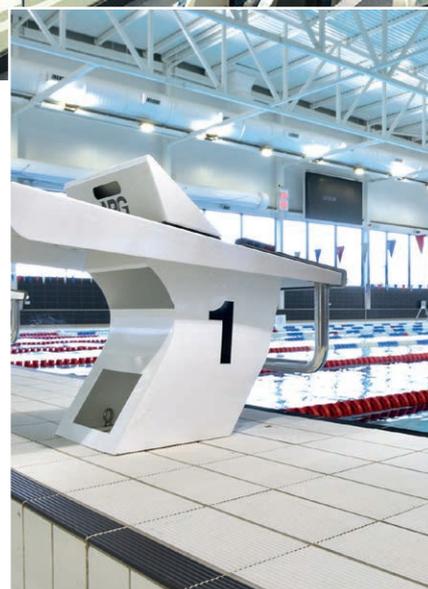
## MAKING A SPLASH

BELFAST'S NEW AQUATICS CENTRE SET TO BECOME A BREEDING GROUND FOR FUTURE OLYMPIANS...

Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre will be pivotal in helping Belfast City Council to achieve its target of doubling the number of swimming pool users to 1.5m per year by 2030. It could also prove a vital building block for young swimmers with Commonwealth Games or Olympic aspirations. The eight-lane pool, the biggest in Belfast, incorporates state-of-the-art timing devices for competitive swim meets and spectator seating for 250. The complex's diving pool will be home to an Academy set

“The biggest challenge is coordinating the different services within the structure.”

up by former World champion and To undertake construction of such specialized facilities would be a daunting prospect for most companies. However, it's fair to say Heron Bros has long since ditched their water wings. “We have developed a lot of valuable experience in building leisure facilities, including pools,” JP Higgins added. “The biggest challenge is coordinating the different services within the structure.” Although some aspects of the swimming pool are sub-contracted, much of the construction work remains the responsibility of Heron Bros. “We have been very busy with many projects that have similar needs and with that, you end up with a lot of awareness for the technical coordination issues that have to be considered, as many of them can have a knock-on effect to the finished product.”





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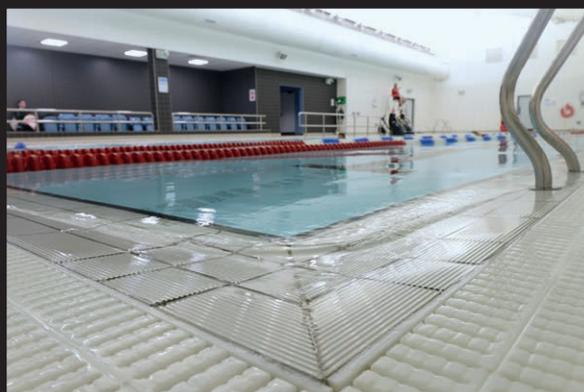
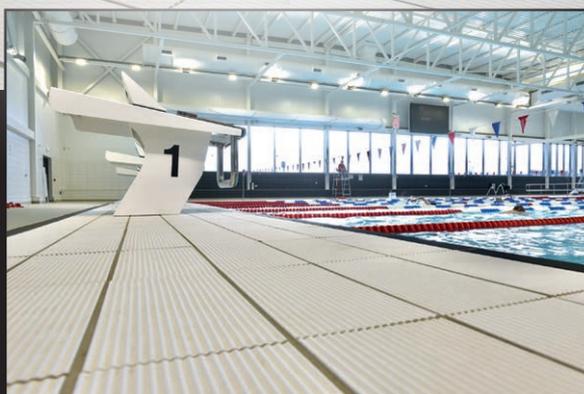
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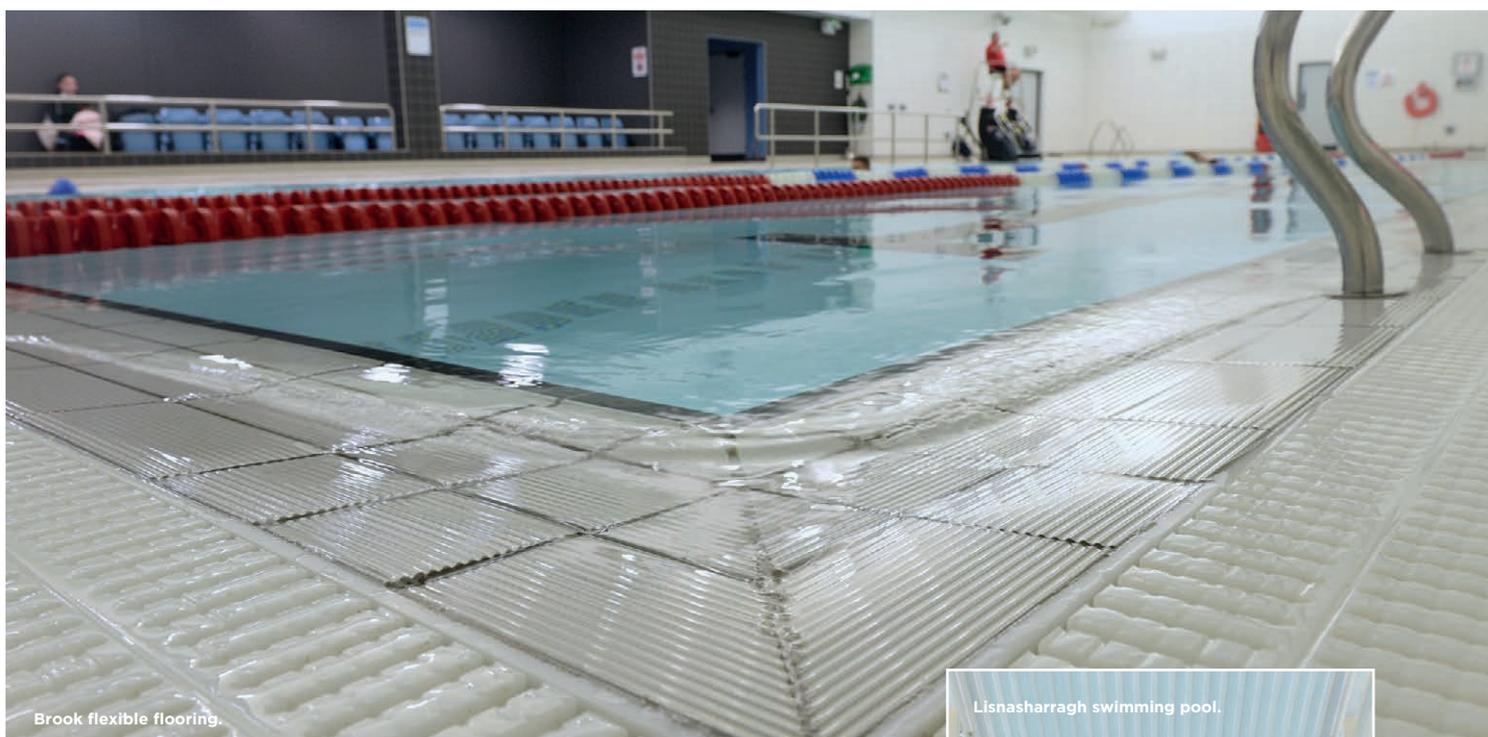
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Lisnasharragh swimming pool.

## ALWAYS ON THE MOVE

FLEXIBLE FLOORING IN THE AQUATIC AREAS OF BOTH LEISURE CENTRES PRESENTED A CHALLENGE...

Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre will become a focal point for swimming galas, water polo, and, of course, diving competitions.

It's an innovation Belfast has been crying out for. "Lisnasharragh transforms aquatics in the city and introduces some features that have never been here before," said Gareth Kirk, Regional Director of social enterprise GLL (Greenwich Leisure Ltd) who will

manage the facilities in partnership with Belfast City Council.

However, at the new Brook Leisure Centre the construction of a swimming

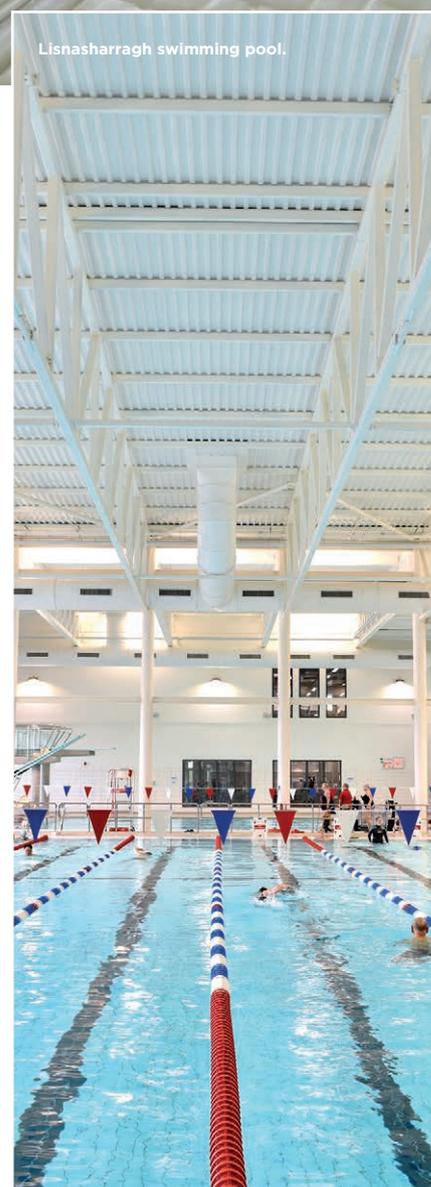
The construction of a swimming pool has also caused a few ripples of excitement.

pool has also caused a few ripples of excitement. Focused on the provision of outdoor sport facilities, the inclusion of a pool is nonetheless

significant. The Brook Leisure Centre's four-lane swimming pool is actually a first for the 'Colin' area of the city. Not only that, but it can be transformed into a specialized sensory pool that is currently the biggest of its kind in a public leisure facility

anywhere in the UK.

Both the Brook and Lisnasharragh's water provision areas presented a considerable construction challenge, not least because both boast a full moving floor system. "The two leisure centres have the benefit of state-of-the-art moving floor systems. This allows the client to alter the floor levels to suit the needs of the user. These uses have a very wide range; from competition diving, children's lessons and sensory classes."



Brook swimming pool.

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Brook outdoor facilities.

## PITCH PERFECT

HERON BROS CALL ON PAST EXPERIENCE IN THE LEISURE AND STADIA SECTOR...

If you weren't sure what Brooks Leisure Centre's USP is, then the sea of green provides a fairly useful clue. 'Outdoor leisure provision' is the buzz phrase, the reality is two full-sized 3G pitches for Gaelic games or soccer, plus three 3G outdoor door 5-a-side pitches, and a further three enclosed. That's a lot of artificial turf, by anyone's standards.

Heron Bros, thankfully, have a lot of experience with 3G pitches. The company previously constructed two FIFA Grade 1 standard 3G pitches at Loudoun Academy in East Ayrshire, Scotland, and the nearby Auchinleck Academy. The Brooks site covers more than 20 acres and the pitches devised by the design team are built, with accompanying drainage system, and taken to a base level. Then the sub-contractor is called to lay the

A Hurling Wall, the first of its kind in a public leisure centre in Northern Ireland.

actual 3G surface.

In addition to the extensive artificial surfaces, Brooks Leisure Centre is furthering the search for the next Olcan McFetridge or 'Sambo' McNaughton with the inclusion of a Hurling Wall, the first of its kind in a public leisure centre in Northern Ireland.



### Home and away...

Heron Bros considerable experience in the leisure sector includes recent projects in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales:

- The new grandstand at Kingspan Stadium, HQ for Ulster Rugby
- The £13.4 Aberavon Leisure and Fitness Centre, Port Talbot, Wales
- Sport Ireland's National Indoor Arena in Blanchardstown
- FIFA Grade 1 3G pitches in East Ayrshire, Scotland.





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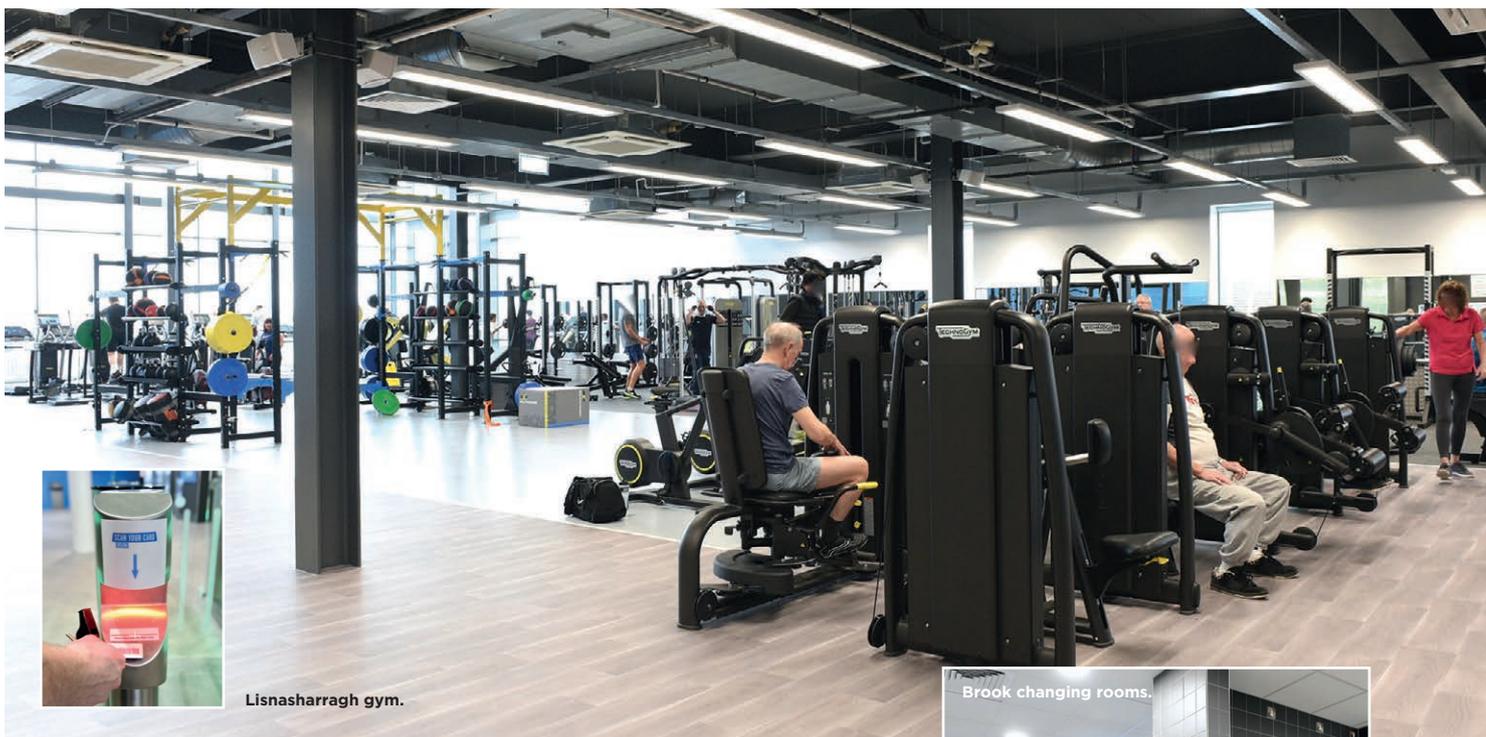
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Lisnasharragh gym.

# A WEIGHTY MATTER

BELFAST'S LATEST LEISURE CENTRES OFFER STATE-OF-THE-ART FITNESS AND TRAINING FACILITIES...

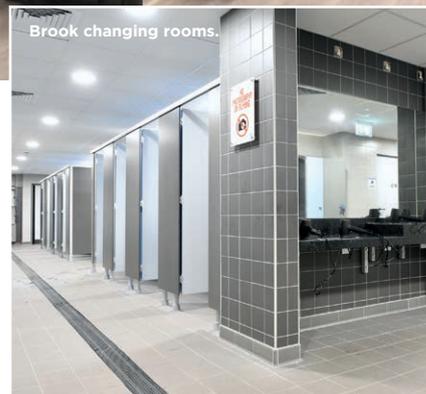
If you're keen to lift some heavy weights, then what better view than the iconic Harland & Wolff cranes? That's what greets users of the new Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre gym, a spacious two-storey space offering 140 workout stations, the latest Technogym cardio and resistance stations, a dedicated free weight area, and additional functional training areas. The centre also features three fitness studios, running classes from high intensity to Les Mills RPM virtual reality indoor cycling. If that isn't enough to get up a sweat, then why not try the four court sports hall for gymnastics, to shoot a few hoops, play football or badminton. Also included in the Heron Bros remit was construction of an innovative Health Improvement room to support a range of specialist programmes

If you're keen to lift some heavy weights, then what better view than the iconic Harland & Wolff cranes?

including Healthwise and MacMillan 'Move More'. This highly-accessible, user-friendly centre also includes pool pod, lifts, toilets, shower and changing, and a Coffee Corner for drinks and snacks.

If you want to get a pump on at Brook Leisure Centre you are also well served by an expansive gymnasium with 60 workout stations, plus the same cardio and resistance, fitness studio classes, sports hall and health improvement provision as Lisnasharragh. Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Daniel Baker, opened both Lisnasharragh and Brook, saying: "The facilities

will play a vital role in improving health and well-being in the local communities, which is a central aim of the Belfast Agenda, the city's community plan."



Brook changing rooms.



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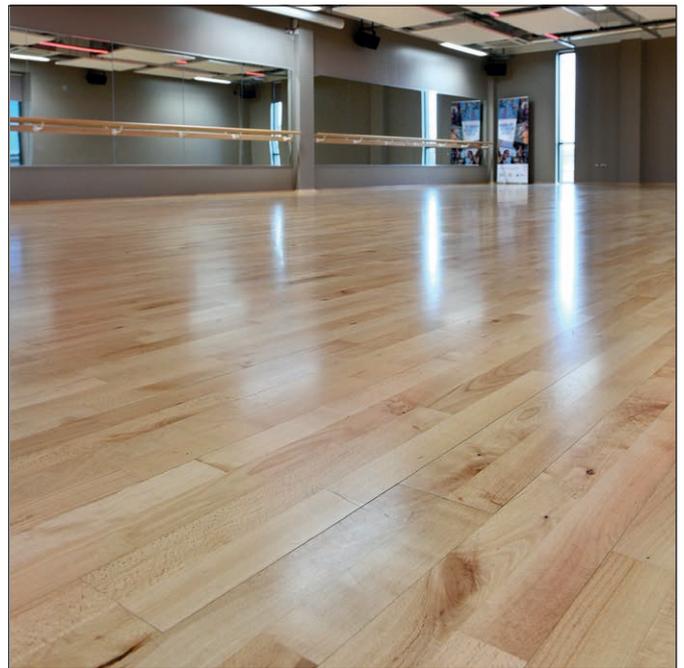
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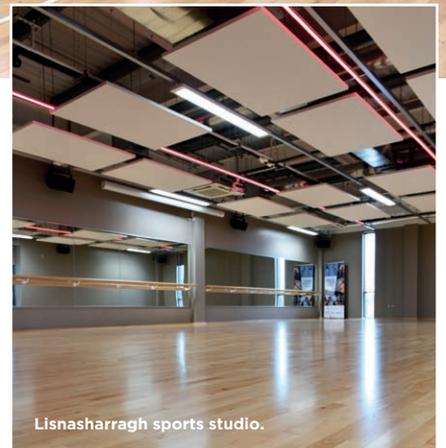
## BELFAST'S LEISURE SERVICES



Brook access and membership control.



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Lisnasharragh sports studio.

## SPORT FOR ALL

NOT JUST COMPLEX CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS,  
BUT THE CHANCE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO  
LOCAL COMMUNITIES...

“This is an investment in our city and its people,” is how Belfast City Council’s Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services, Nigel Grimshaw, describes the Leisure Transformation Programme. That capital investment in a more active and healthier population is welcomed by communities in the east and west of a city, who have responded with support throughout the construction process. Multi-million pound projects like Lisnasharragh (£20m) and Brook (£15m) inevitably lead to disruption for the very communities the new facilities ultimately serve. Situated in residential areas of the city, it was important for the main contractor to engage with the local community and do everything in their power to keep disturbance to a minimum. “That was

“It was clear from the outset that the communities were fully behind the projects.”

quite challenging in both instances as there is no way to prevent construction on this scale from impacting in some shape or form on neighbouring businesses and residences,” J.P. Higgins explained. “However, it was clear from the outset that the communities were fully behind the projects and appreciated the value they would bring.” Keith Farren, Operations Director at Heron Bros, agrees: “We believe that the local communities who contributed to the success of these centres through their support and positive engagement will enjoy these amazing facilities for many years.” So what’s next for Heron Bros? Well, there’s no time to rest on their laurels. Another leisure centre project is nearing completion - a fourth about to begin.



## New goals for the Heron Bros team...

Heron Bros are about to handover the keys to a third gleaming leisure centre. To see why Andersonstown Leisure Centre was child’s play for the Draperstown-based construction company, WHY NOT CHECK OUT THE NEXT EDITION OF NORTHERN BUILDER?

Lessons learned from the construction of the Brook Leisure Centre will also be carried over to leisure centre project number four. Heron Bros starts work next month on Avoniel Leisure Centre, like Brook an outdoor leisure provision focused facility.

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## VAT cut needed for industry recovery

The Chancellor must use the upcoming Budget to slash the rate of VAT on repair and maintenance work and to invest in the construction sector in order to maintain the industry's recovery, according to the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) in response to the ONS construction output data published in November 2019. The ONS found that a 1.9% increase in monthly construction output in November was the largest monthly growth since January 2019, when it grew 2.4%.

Brian Berry, Chief Executive of the FMB, said, "While 2019 was a year marked by political and economic uncertainty, there do seem to be some small signs of hope for the construction industry, with the largest monthly growth in the industry seen in November since the start of the year. It is too soon to tell whether this will be a longer-term trend, as some sectors such as private house building and repair and maintenance continue to see sluggish growth." "The upcoming Budget provides the

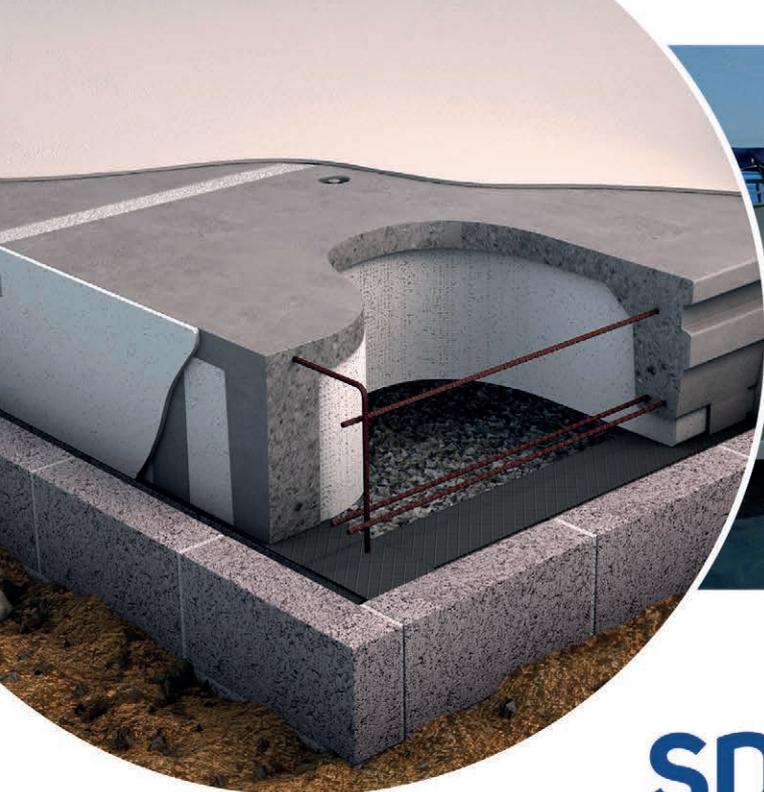
perfect opportunity for the Government to help ensure this positive trend at the end of 2019 continues into the new decade. In order to help boost the industry, the Chancellor should prioritise cutting VAT on home improvement works, so that tax isn't a barrier to home-owners upgrading the energy efficiency of their properties. The Government should also use the Budget as an opportunity to invest in construction skills to help build the homes and infrastructure we need, and invest in planning departments to ensure the planning system doesn't act as a blockage to the Government's ambitious housing targets." The Northern Ireland Regional Director for the FMB said, "We have looked at how successfully a similar program has worked in the ROI. It would be

a great initiative to energise the refurbishment and home improvement market. These aspects are the lifeblood of the industry here and should be recognised as a vital economy builder." The Federation of Master Builders is the largest trade association in the UK construction industry, representing thousands of firms in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Established in 1941 to protect the interests of small and medium-sized (SME) construction firms, the FMB is an independent, non-profit organisation, lobbying for members' interests at both the national and local level. It is a fantastic source of knowledge, professional advice and support for its members, providing a range of modern and relevant business building services to help them succeed.

"While 2019 was a year marked by political and economic uncertainty, there do seem to be some small signs of hope for the construction industry."

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Creagh keeps the installation process simple for their customers.



House builders are switching from beam and block to Spantherm.

COUNTY ANTRIM COMPANY, CREAGH CONCRETE, HAS BEEN WORKING HARD ACROSS THE WATER...

# Housing spurred on by Spantherm

Spantherm, the specially designed, thermally efficient flooring from Creagh Concrete has been utilised at a housing development in North Muskham, Nottinghamshire in England. The new development was built by Northern Ireland-based Geda Construction and was completed at the end of 2019.

Geda Construction chose the Spantherm insulated precast concrete flooring system as it's designed specifically for use at ground floor level in residential and small-to-medium-sized commercial projects. Geda opted for the work to be completed by Creagh's expert fitting team, which required no additional labour for them and saved their team a lot of time on site.

"Geda used Spantherm to push the project along as its one operation that just makes it so much quicker and easier to facilitate on site. We are impressed by the installation of the slabs and the

time that it saves us on site," said Shaun Wormall, Site Manager for Geda. Spantherm is installed in just minutes, not days. By producing high performance insulated concrete units off site, Creagh has redefined the speed of installing a fully insulated floor. This is the next generation of structural flooring systems designed as the efficient alternative to labour intensive beam and block installations.

Housebuilders increasingly explore the opportunities for new ideas to reduce labour on site and boost efficiency in the build - it certainly makes sense to begin with the ground floor. The initial appeal of Spantherm is clear, as a typical floor on a detached house or a pair of semis is

fitted on site in less than two hours. Once in place and grouted, the floor achieves its full structural capability within 72 hours but building activity can commence on perimeter walls within 24 hours.

Shaun states, "From a site management point of view it has been really good. Creagh has been very responsive, and the production timescales and installation have been quick and painless. We would definitely use Spantherm again, brilliant product and well managed."

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"This is the next generation of structural flooring systems designed as the efficient alternative to labour intensive beam and block installations."



A typical 90m<sup>2</sup> ground floor is installed in just 90 minutes.



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you can have the timber frame kit supplied and erected, with all the insulation and the plasterboard, and the windows and external doors supplied and fitted for under £35,000!

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“Kilbroney Timber Frame can provide a complete service from design through to installation.”



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(L-R) Rodney Lavender, Ross Millen, Neil Logan and Neil Millen in the new Officeworks showrooms.

BELFAST COMPANY BRINGS TOP TALENT AND THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY TO THE TABLE...

## OfficeWorks wonders

The workplace has evolved at a rapid pace as companies realise the benefits of a comfortable and creative environment for their staff. The right workspace can do more than increase productivity – it can also be a contributing factor in recruiting the right people to begin with.

A couple of fabric wall partitions and rickety chair just won't cut it if you're trying to compete for the best in the talent pool. It's not only the recent graduates who have bought into the notion of the 'aspirational workspace', it's also suggested that 20% of the current workforce would actually take a salary cut in exchange for a 'better' workplace. OfficeWorks is a Belfast-based

company that specialises in creating contemporary commercial working environments. Combining cutting-edge technology with experienced, highly-skilled staff enables OfficeWorks to effectively and efficiently manage a project from inception through to completion.

Fit-out, refurbishment, or solely the supply of state-of-the-art office furniture, the ability to accommodate all sectors under one roof leads to lower overheads. Control the costs and you can offer increased value without compromising on quality. "What sets us aside from many of our competitors is that we have brought everything in-house," explained OfficeWorks'

Commercial Manager, Neil Logan. "Adapting and diversifying during economic downturns, we decided to focus on internal training rather than sub-contracting. Our staff is now multi-skilled, and we are one of the few companies in our sector who provide a full service, from raised access floors to glass walls, partitions, furniture, and acoustic solutions." Now working out of an impressive new showroom and project office, OfficeWorks is better placed than ever to meet clients' needs.

"What sets us aside from many of our competitors is that we have brought everything in-house."

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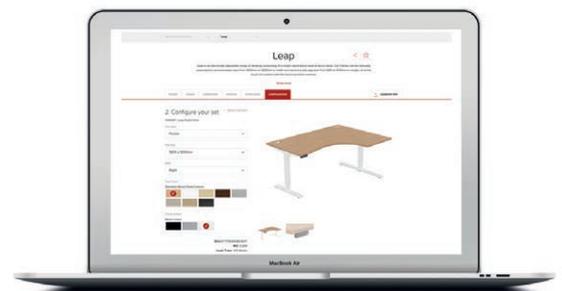
OFFICEWORKS EMPLOYS GROUND-BREAKING TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE LIFE EASIER FOR THEIR CLIENTS...

## Go con-figure

OfficeWorks is taking online project specifying to a different level. Along with its key manufacturer, the company is preparing to launch technology that will revolutionise the way architects, quantity surveyors, and designers plan their office fit-out. The online product configurator for office furniture saves both time and money, and is unique in the UK and European marketplace. "Clients, architects, and quantity surveyors will be given a login," Neil explained. "They click on the configurator, create a project, then select and place furniture, from receptions to desks and chairs, swapping tops and colours - all with detailed drawings, specifications, even lead-in times.

"Not only will it help to accurately price the job, but it will enable the client to view and work on their fit-out plan remotely. All too often I've heard people saying how difficult it is to factor in the time to visit showrooms. This new system allows you to configure exactly what you want on a laptop, at any place or time." With new premises, products and branding with updated graphics on the company fleet - this is an exciting time for OfficeWorks. The aim of implementing these changes is to provide a professional and proficient service to clients that takes full account of contemporary business practices. In addition to the innovative configurator, OfficeWorks has

also implemented a new project management software that handles the complete project process, from the initial phone call or web enquiry right through to handover and final account.



"The online product configurator for office furniture saves both time and money and is unique in the UK and European marketplace."

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Through research and experience, we understand the challenges faced within the evolving and ever-changing workplace. Our furniture creates environments which empower people to work when, where and how they choose. To support changes in your working environment, we are continually innovating to offer the most effective solutions.

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Building strong, loyal relationships is important to us. That's why we go the extra mile to offer honest advice and exclusively support our dealers to build strong relationships. We also like to do our bit to make the planet happier and healthier. Nomique invest heavily in the local community, wellbeing of our people, and are continually innovating to offer sustainable products.

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OFFICEWORKS OFFERS A RANGE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY OFFICE FURNITURE DESIGNED TO COMBAT THE 'PLASTIC SOUP' PROBLEM...

## Stylish and sustainable

OfficeWorks is conscious that many companies are committed to using sustainable products whenever possible as part of an overall aim to become more environmentally friendly.

Going green does not have to come at the expense of quality or style, however. OfficeWorks are currently a stockist for high-end office furniture made from re-cycled Amsterdam Canal plastic. Plastic Whale is a collection of stunning commercial furniture, featuring a boardroom table, chairs, lamps, and acoustic panels.

'Plastic soup' is a growing global problem, with the world's waters increasingly polluted. We've all seen the images of living

creatures trapped in plastic, waste material that also breaks down into tiny particles that is then ingested by fish, entering the food chain and ending up on our plates. Plastic Whale is a movement of like-minded people formed in 2011. With the motto: Let's stop talking. Let's start doing, they began fishing PET (polyethylene terephthalate) from Amsterdam's canals.

The plastic goes through an intense process; washed and shredded, pressed into granules to create PET foam; stringing out the fibres into PET felt. Incorporating their own waste (the base of the chair is re-cycled steel waste) they manufacture a stunning collection with sustainability at its core. As well as sustainable products,

there is also a Plant-A-Tree (PAT) initiative; for every desk sold, a tree will be planted to help establish young native trees across both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. If you or your company are interested in how Plastic Whale products and the PAT initiative can give substance to sustainability targets (and bring style and innovation to your fit-out), why not contact OfficeWorks for further details?

OfficeWorks is currently a stockist for high-end office furniture made from re-cycled Amsterdam Canal plastic.

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'HEALTH AND WELL-BEING' IS MORE THAN JUST THE LATEST BUZZ PHRASE IN THE BUSINESS WORLD...

## Happy workers equal higher profits

**H**ands-up who wants increased productivity, decreased employee absences, and improved staff retention? Everyone...thought so. Certainly, there are some very convincing arguments to support the increased focus on the health and well-being of staff. OfficeWorks recognise the compelling evidence behind concepts like sit-stand desks and a people-friendly acoustic environment.

"In Germany it's now a legal requirement to offer staff the option of a sit/stand desk," Neil explained. "At OfficeWorks we have been aware for quite some time of the growing importance and increased emphasis on health and well-being in the workplace.

We now have the products, and the knowledge to incorporate health and well-being into a fit-out, or advise on product choice." Included in the OfficeWorks health and well-being product range is the Leap Collection. Featuring single stand-alone and bench desks, the frames can be manually adjusted to accommodate tops 1200mm to 1800mm in width, and electronically-adjusted for height 655mm to 1255mm via a touch sensitive control.

When health and well-being is discussed, many fail to appreciate the role of acoustics. Modifications to the acoustic landscape can have far-reaching benefits such as improved staff productivity, concentration levels,

and overall well-being.

With unrivalled expertise in this area, staff at OfficeWorks can advise on cutting edge products like Fluffo Air (overhead panels designed for large spaces), Fluffo 3D (acoustic wall panels for offices, meeting rooms and pods), and Fluffo Glass (a suction cup mounting system for glass surfaces that absorbs sound and reduces echoes).

OfficeWorks is also one of the preferred suppliers in the UK & Ireland for specialist acoustic product manufacturer Ecophon, part of the global Saint-Gobain Group.

Want to know more? You can order a FREE Health & Well-being Catalogue at [www.office-works.com](http://www.office-works.com).

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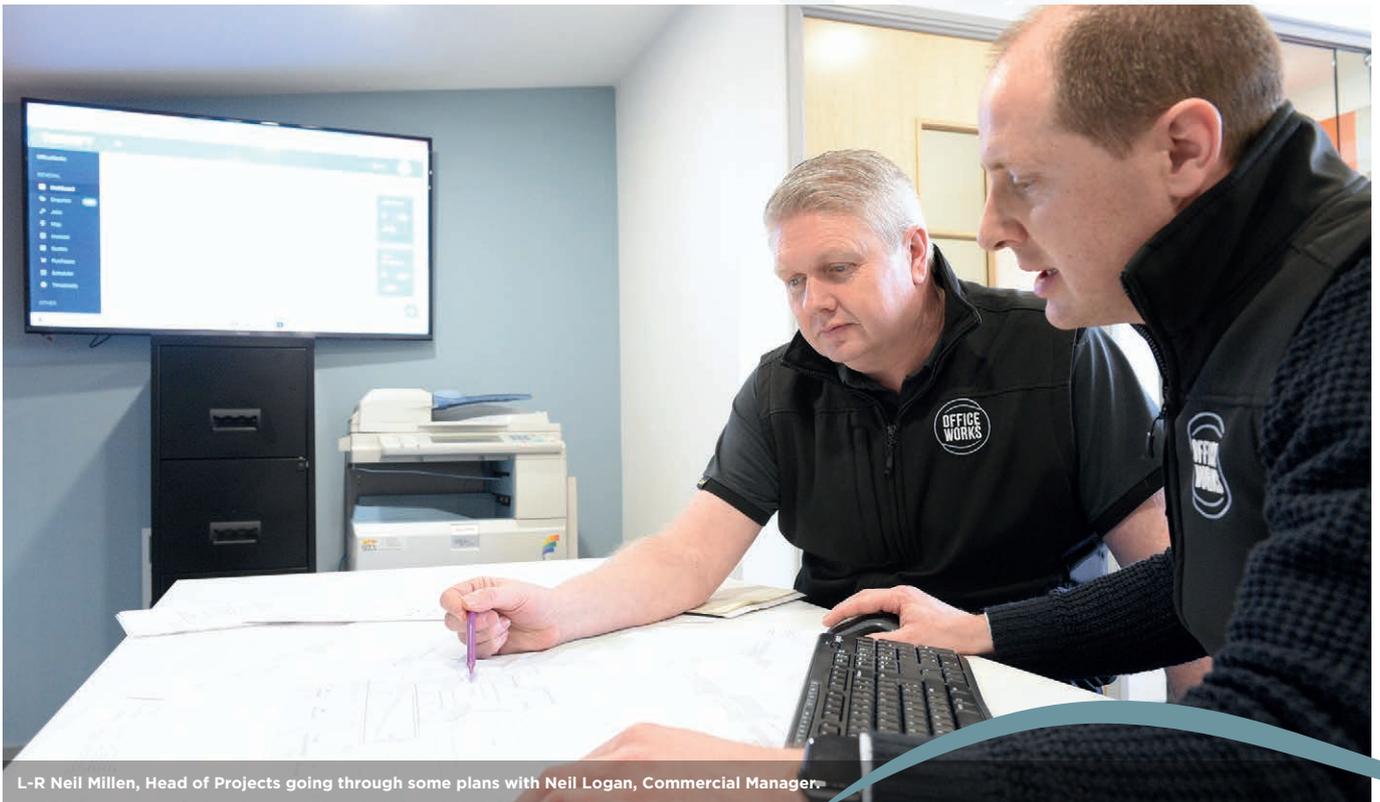
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**WISHING OFFICEWORKS CONTINUED SUCCESS.**



L-R Neil Millen, Head of Projects going through some plans with Neil Logan, Commercial Manager.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH, INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE, AND PUTTING THE CLIENT FIRST IS THE CORNERSTONE OF SUCCESS...

## Investing in people

“Repeat business is a big part of OfficeWorks.” That statement says much about the importance Neil Logan and his team place on customer service, and also the degree to which that approach has been successful. Technology might play an integral role, but it has been the investment in staff that has under-pinned the business. “We have a fantastic core team here,” said Neil, who has been involved in office fit-out since his teenage years. “Our Head of Projects, Neil Millen, is a respected figure in the fit-out sector of the construction industry; our new Furniture Sales Manager Ronnie Ferris has a wealth of industry experience;

and we are about to appoint a Specifications Manager who will be out on the road helping clients at the early stages of design to choose the right products to suit their needs.” OfficeWorks is also a company that believes in investing time and energy into on-going staff training. More often than not starting at the coal-face, then working through the system to become skilled tradesmen and project managers, the promotion from within philosophy ensures enviable staff retention and a workforce capable of seamlessly moving between divisions. The OfficeWorks project portfolio is indicative of the company’s professionalism,

with NI Sport, the Lottery Fund, Invest NI, Concentrix, P&O Ferries, and Randox just some of their high profile clients.

Offering a comprehensive service provision that includes Cat A and Cat B fit-outs, refurbishment and dilapidation works, OfficeWorks specialist provision includes raised access flooring, glazed partitions, acoustic solutions, and office furniture.

Technology might play an integral role, but it has been the investment in staff that has under-pinned the business.

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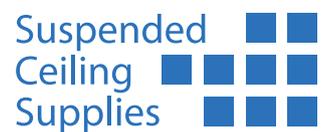
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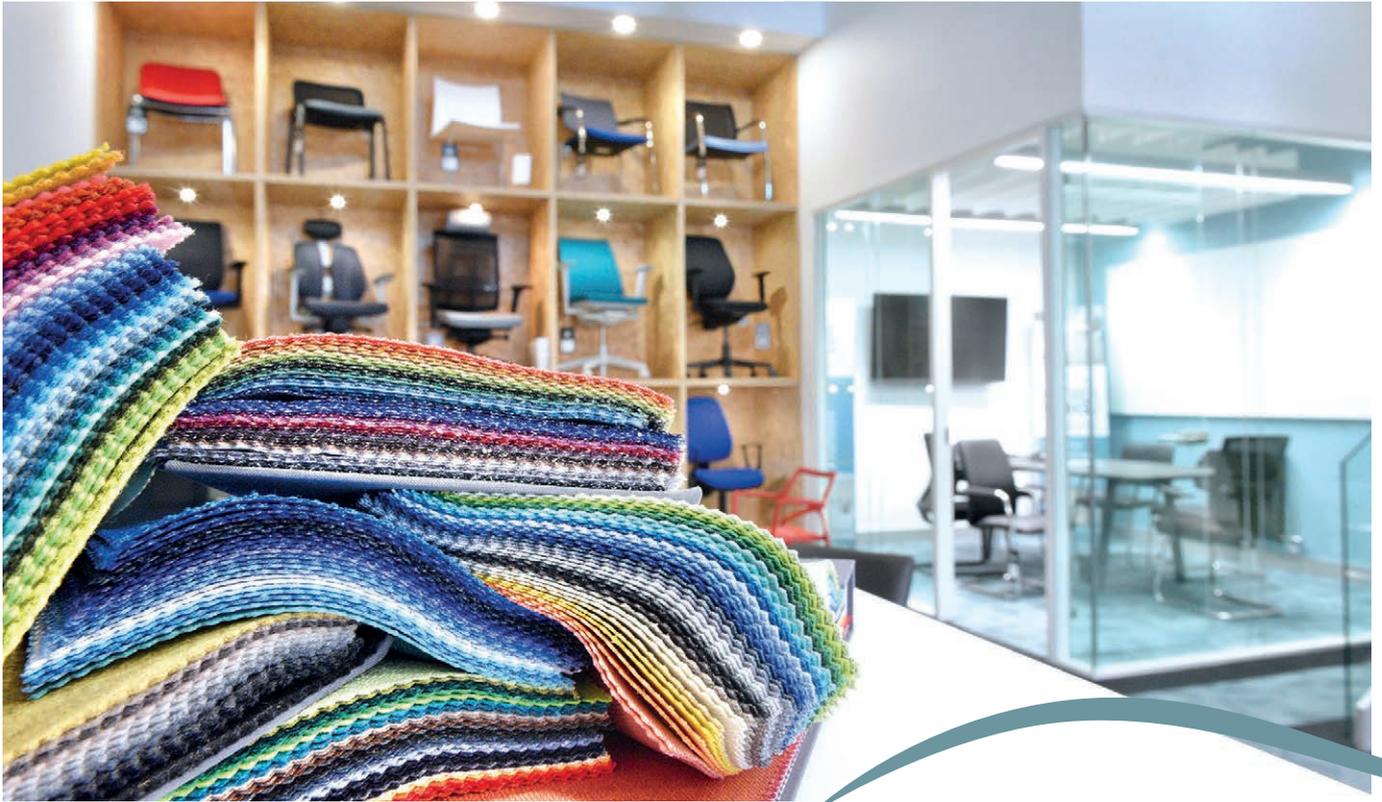


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LEAVE YOUR PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT OFFICE FURNITURE AT THE DOOR OF OFFICEWORKS...

## Where style meets function

Office furniture has to be functional, but does that mean it can't be stylish? OfficeWorks' comprehensive range provides the best of both worlds, with desks - yes, even the humble desk - that are quite simply stunning. Take the Auttica Executive Desk, an avant-garde shape that positively reeks of prestige and was voted Product of the Year. The Soreno, a desk that creates the illusion that one end is floating in thin air, is a unique design combined with the functionality of durable tempered glass and a matching range of minimalist tables and cabinets. It's not just desks. The range extends to conference and

meeting seating, formal or informal, with sleek modern finishes. Also available is soft furnishing for break-out and collaboration areas in myriad styles and colours. Officeworks provides: modern, stylish, and cost-effective space dividing solutions, fully upholstered in a choice of fabrics; Pods by Hush Meet with advanced acoustics; and long, straight, or curved boardroom, break-room, meeting room, canteen and training tables. Receptions are an important part of any visitor experience - Officeworks have set out to redefine your expectations. Whether it's the dynamic Illusion reception unit with RGB LED lamps, the modular and

classy Ashford, or the stunning two-layered Block - these are statement pieces that take office design to the next level. Even the once basic operator's chair has had an injection of art and elegance. Built with ergonomic stability and comfort still to the fore, this humble office work horse now comes in a staggering array of shapes, sizes and colours. Some are so cool, you might just have to prise your staff out of them at close of play.

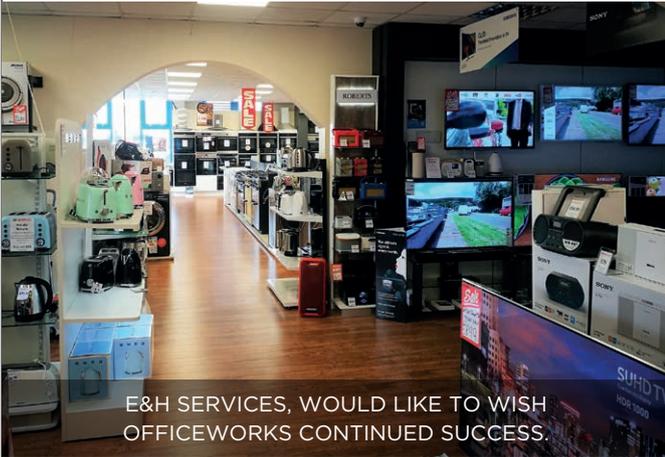
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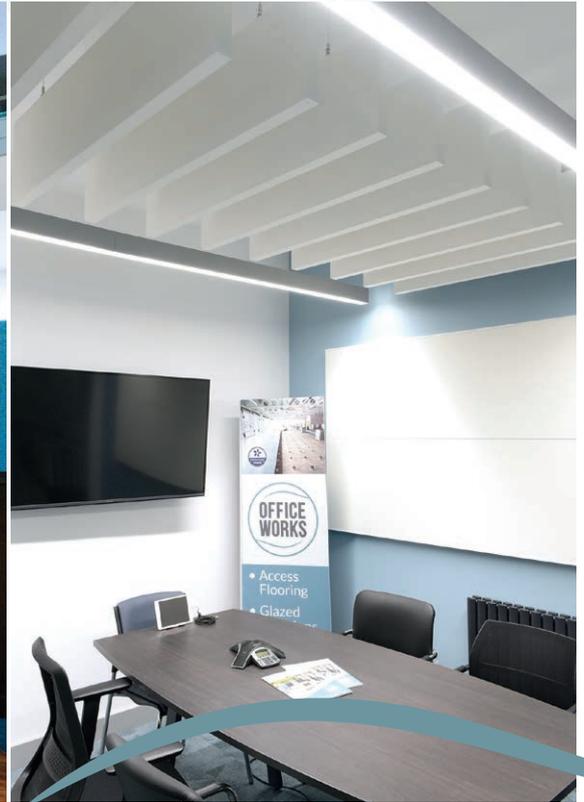
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OFFICEWORKS LOOKS CLEAR FOR TAKE-OFF AS THE COMPANY BEGINS A NEW AND POTENTIALLY EXCITING CHAPTER...

## Let's drive things forward

It's fair to say that Neil Logan has a positive outlook on business. While many have lamented the uncertainty of Brexit, lost sleep over recessions that might never happen, and second guessed themselves into a standstill, Neil and OfficeWorks chose instead to take the bull by the horns. "You just can't sit back. We have learned to adapt, to roll with the punches and the decision to bring all facets of the business in-house has proved correct. "Yes, there's uncertainty over Brexit, but we're just facing it head on. The only thing to do is see it as an opportunity, and that's why we continue to invest in our workforce, in technology, and to expand the business. It's time for change, time for growth, so let's

just drive things forward." Boris may have taken us out of the European Union, but that has not prevented OfficeWorks adopting a cosmopolitan approach. "We've actually been tendering for quite a lot of work abroad recently. Clients asked us to submit tenders in Porto and Poland, and we've also priced jobs in Bulgaria and Germany." OfficeWorks is perfectly placed to ride this new wave of office workplaces that are designed with more than just practical considerations in mind. As Neil sees things, it's really a fairly simple concept anyway. "We spend a lot of our lives in the workplace. We make an investment in making our home a nice place to be, so why not the workplace?"



"Yes, there's uncertainty over Brexit, but we're just facing it head on."



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A HOST OF NEW PRODUCTS FROM LAFARGE CEMENT ARE SET TO TAKE NORTHERN IRELAND BY STORM...

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Lafarge Cement, part of Aggregate Industries, has further strengthened its market-leading packed cement range with the introduction of five new products; Instant Concrete, High Performance Concrete, General Purpose Concrete, Mortar Mix and Postmix. With no mixing required and available in 20kg bags, both the High Performance and Instant Concrete products are quick, easy and ready to use - making the lives of builders and DIYers alike as hassle-free as possible.

In terms of application, the 40N strength High Performance Concrete is suitable for forming the base for domestic garages and driveways. Meanwhile, the 15N strength Instant Concrete is ideal for garden sheds, greenhouses and domestic footpaths and steps that require quick setting. The launch of these new products comes as Lafarge Cement's response to rising demand from merchants and customers is to offer more specialised packed cement

solutions. It follows the immense success of the business' already well-established packed cement range, which is renowned industry wide for its excellent quality.

The new products will join Lafarge Cement's existing portfolio of widely available packed cement solutions including Super White Cement and Rapid Set Cement. Guaranteeing a local supply of the highest quality, the General Purpose range is manufactured at the Cookstown Cement Plant in County Tyrone, which has a strong history within Northern Ireland, dating all the way back to 1970. In recent years, the plant has undergone a major rebrand, following the LafargeHolcim merger in July 2015, when it became part of Aggregate Industries. Damian Curran, National Sales Manager at Lafarge Cement, comments, "Through our ongoing engagement with builders and builders' merchants here in Northern Ireland, in

recent years we've had growing calls from our customers to offer more specialised solutions which offer the level of superior quality our brand has become known for."

"Hence, stepping up our unrivalled track record for customer-focused innovation, we've responded by adding Instant Concrete, High Performance Concrete, General Purpose Concrete, Postmix, and Mortar into the mix of our well-established packed cement range. "We'd encourage all merchants and their customers to make use of these high quality products, which will no doubt enable even greater ease of use and convenience for busy builders and DIYers."

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"Lafarge Cement's response to rising demand from merchants and customers is to offer more specialised packed cement solutions"



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We are delighted to showcase recent commercial projects including: HMRC Erskine House for Graham Construction; Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre for Heron Brothers; The Gateway Antrim, for QMAC Construction and Áras na bhFál, for Canavan Construction.



Áras na bhFál.



HMRC - Erskine House.



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NEWTONABBEY-BASED RTU EXPLORES HOW THEIR PRODUCTS HAVE BEEN USED FOR SOME VERY HIGH-PROFILE PROJECTS...

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### LISNASHARRAGH LEISURE CENTRE

Heron Brothers used RTU mortar as part of the £20million regeneration of the former Robinson Centre. In addition to our standard and charcoal mortar, we supplied mint mortar to match Acheson Glover's sporting green Acoustic Block® that reduces sound energy across the state-of-the-art fitness suite, sports hall and studios.

### ERSKINE HOUSE OFFICE AND RETAIL

RTU is delighted to have supplied to Graham Construction's development of Erskine House. Our building products, including M6 classification standard building mortar, charcoal

mortar, screed and concrete, were used in this iconic Belfast project. Located on Chichester St, it consists of retail units and office space to accommodate over 1,600 HMRC workers.

### ÁRAS NA BHFÁL LANGUAGE CENTRE

Located on the junction of Falls Road and Broadway, Áras na bhFál is both an Irish language centre and impressive physical addition to the development of Belfast's Gaeltacht Quarter. RTU supplied concrete, standard mortar, white mortar, dark brown mortar and screed to Canavan Construction's outstanding project, which completed in 2019. The Gateway Visitor Centre RTU standard mortar was supplied QMAC Construction as part of Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council's new visitor centre at Antrim Lough Shore. Stunning architectural design and build were combined to maximise the panoramic views across the Lough Neagh.

## Signature Range

### EXPOSA®

An aesthetically pleasing, durable and slip-resistant decorative concrete, Exposa® is the ultimate alternative to paving, asphalt, tarmac and loose gravel. What makes Exposa® stand out from the crowd is the variety of colours on offer that allows designers and architects to be bold or subtle in their design work.

### ULTRAFLO®

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INNOVATION AND BEST VALUE IN CONSTRUCTION SINCE 1969

RIDGEWAY HAS LED THE WAY THROUGH INNOVATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN IRELAND BY INTRODUCING NEW PRODUCTS TO THE MARKET...

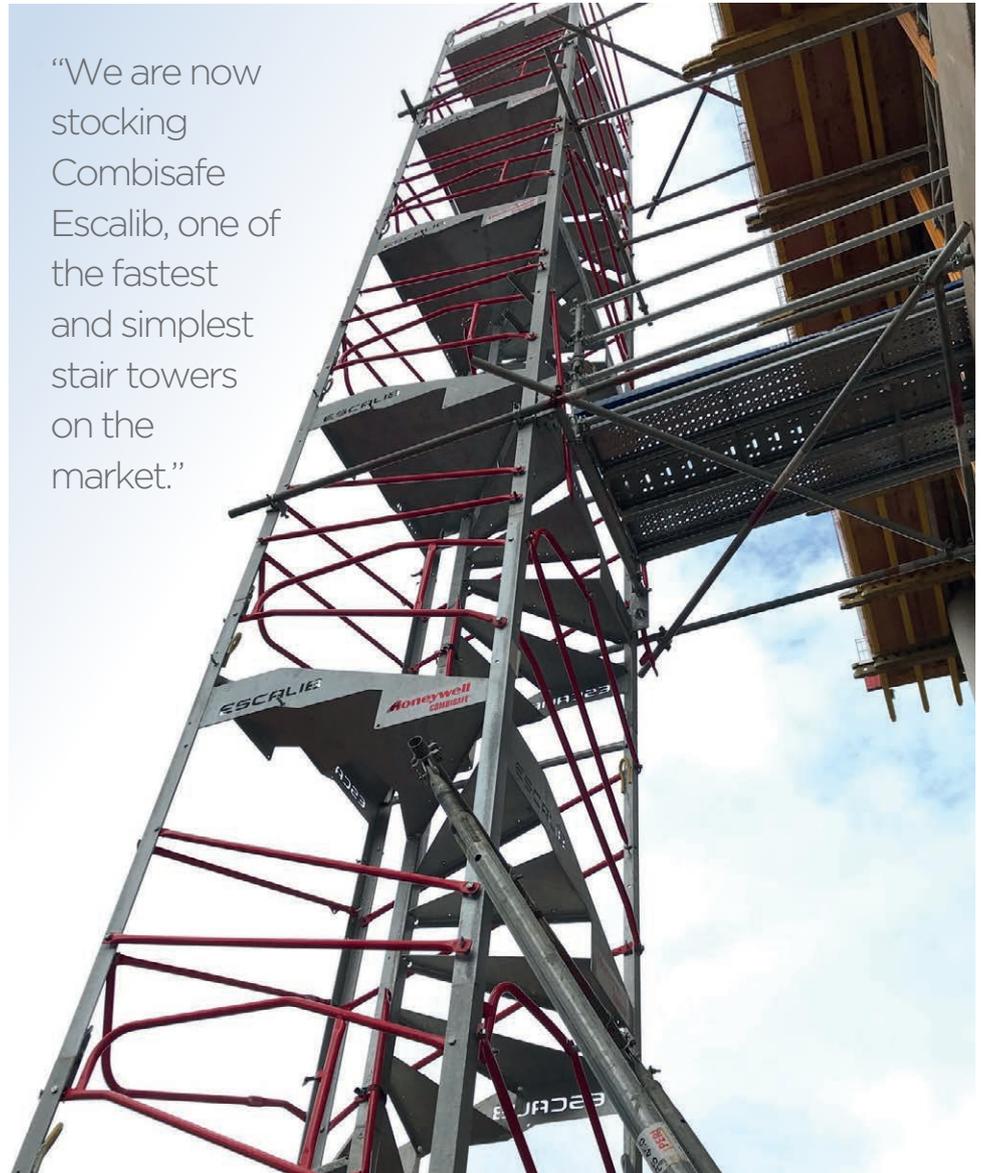
## Innovation and best value - Ridgeway, the “go to” destination for Work at Height

**S**afety at height is at the forefront of modern-day life on a building site, and Ridgeway has a vast range of complementary products that offer the best value in solving work at height related issues. With engineering capabilities for design and the best trained teams of installers, Ridgeway can offer loading platforms, temporary edge protection and site access stairs.

Our strategic partnership with Conquip has opened a vast range of new products to Ridgeway that align perfectly with our work at height capabilities. Conquip CantiDecks are a temporary loading platform that extend from a building structure to allow materials and equipment to be loaded in and out of the building safely. The CantiDeck system is the fastest loading bay for relocation and installation, with a high working load capacity to enable loading of a wide variety of materials. On-site training enables site operatives to relocate the platforms safely and efficiently.

Ridgeway is now stocking Combisafe Escalib, one of the fastest and simplest stair towers on the market. For applications where there are space constraints, such as city centres, lift shafts, and roads between carriageways, the Combisafe Escalib is a quick and cost-effective stair tower solution. The Combisafe Steel Mesh Barrier system has been the forerunner in edge protection for two decades. Originally developed to offer an alternative safety system in the most challenging construction environments, it is now the most widely used name in formalised edge protection. With a vast

“We are now stocking Combisafe Escalib, one of the fastest and simplest stair towers on the market.”



array of different attachments Combisafe SMB can offer edge protection solutions for all requirements. Combisafe also supplies the Safety Net Fan which is the latest innovation in high-rise fall protection and is ideally suited to compact inner-city locations where space is at a premium. This system provides collective protection from falling objects and ensures that potential hazards to the general public and site operatives are vastly reduced. Ridgeway has specialist trained and

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# The Gateway Centre

ANTRIM



## THE GATEWAY CENTRE, ANTRIM



## CENTRE OF ATTENTION

## QMAC CONSTRUCTION LTD COMPLETES GATEWAY PROJECT ON THE BANKS OF LOUGH NEAGH...

The Gateway Centre on Antrim's Lough Shore is set to become a popular local landmark. Portal to the tranquil, unspoilt natural beauty of Lough Neagh, it forms an integral part of Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council's strategy to boost tourism in the area. With a stunning waterside setting, the responsibility of realising the council's vision for their new visitor centre fell to QMAC Construction Ltd. Established in 1982 and now one of the country's leading construction companies, QMAC took the reins of the project, partly funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership, in September 2018. "The scope of the works was the development and building of the Gateway project," explained QMAC Construction's Contracts Manager, Stephen McCaffrey. "The employer novated the design team - namely architects, building services engineer, structural and civil engineers to us as

main contractor immediately upon award of contract." The £2.5m Gateway Centre is a multi-faceted building, combining a ground floor exhibition/conference room, provision for an activity space franchise, shower and toilet facilities for the general public, and a new home for the Lough Neagh Rescue. The first floor boasts The Boathouse Restaurant, with an outdoor terrace and stunning views across the Lough. In short, this would be no straight-forward build. "There was a lot of detailed design associated with the building," added Stephen. "The diversity required the use of numerous sub-contractors and placed considerable importance on coordination meetings." QMAC coordinated a combination of materials (and sub-contractors) to bring the design vision to life... Designed by one of Northern Ireland's longest-standing architectural firms RPP Architects Ltd, the Gateway Centre is a striking addition to this

## PROJECT TEAM...

**Client:** Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

**Main Contractor:** QMAC Construction Ltd

**Architect:** RPP Architects

**PM & QS:** Faithful+Gould

**Structural and Civil Engineer:** Doran Consulting

**M&E Consultants:** Williams & Shaw Ltd

**Electrical:** W.K.K. Electrical

**Mechanical:** McCorley Mechanical & Electrical



**QMAC**  
Construction Ltd

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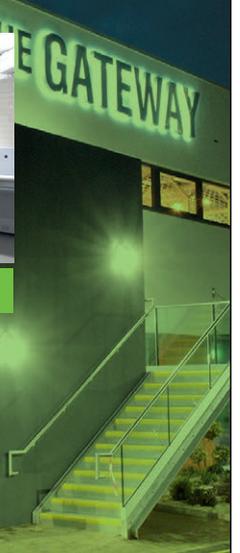
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## THE GATEWAY CENTRE, ANTRIM



lough-side landscape. One of many eye-catching features is the stone panelling that adorns parts of the building's exterior.

"The black slate is a natural stone from CED Stone in Omagh," said QMAC's Stephen McCaffrey. "It's a panelling system of interlocking tiers that fit seamlessly together. A dark natural slate, the hint of rust colour gives it a rustic feel."

The cladding board is another impressive facet of the building. "The board is from the Material Exterior Range by ABET Laminati. Supplied by SIG Plc, it's solid, compact, weather-resistant, and long lasting."

When you have spectacular views across Lough Neagh it almost demands that you make use of natural light when possible. The conference/exhibition room is a case in point. A contemporary space (that will be available for external hire), it is one of numerous areas where glazing is naturally the material of choice. "As there were a lot of glazing aspects to the building, it also required a lot of design coordination meetings. That collaboration between main contractor, design teams and subcontractor was important to ensure a successful project."



## THE IDEAL CHOICE

EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE ENSURED QMAC CONSTRUCTION COULD OVERCOME CHALLENGES...

**R**enowned for their positive, proactive, and solution-based approach, QMAC Construction Ltd was the ideal choice for a complex build like The Gateway.

With a portfolio that includes retail, commercial, industrial, healthcare, education, and of course leisure, the County Tyrone-based company has seen it, done it, and got the T-shirt to prove it.

In addition to the main building itself, the Gateway project involved substantial work on a restructured car park area. Having fulfilled a similar remit in a previous works at the Donaghmore Sports Hub, it was a task QMAC undertook with their trademark professionalism.

Not that everything was a complete walk in the park. "As with all projects, there were challenges," Stephen McCaffrey admitted.

"Placing a sewage pumping station approximately 4m below ground level in high water table levels close

to the Lough was anything but straightforward.

"It involved the installation of a cofferdam, pumps and settlement measures to deal with the incoming groundwater."

Another area requiring food for thought was the simultaneous restaurant and kitchen fit-out.

"We had to undertake the fit-out of the kitchen towards the end of the scheme and these works ran concurrently with the fit-out of the [Boathouse] restaurant on the first floor that was undertaken by the franchise. It was another occasion when regular collaborative meetings between all parties was the key."

"It involved the installation of a cofferdam, pumps and settlement measures to deal with the incoming groundwater."



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THE GATEWAY CENTRE, ANTRIM



# GATEWAY GOES GREEN

A HIGH SPECIFICATION BUILD THAT ALWAYS HAD ONE EYE ON ITS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT...

The Gateway Centre was a high-specification build, from innovative MET to high-tech CCTV, extensive balcony areas to the roof's Solar Photovoltaic system. As with all modern builds, it also placed a great emphasis on energy efficiency and generating the sort of reduced carbon footprint that might get a thumbs up from eco-warrior Greta Thunberg. Efficiency and cost-effectiveness were rightly high on the agenda, but so too was aesthetics. Sure, no-one would set out to construct an ugly building, but let's face it - when the location is this beautiful there's a little added pressure. "Everything had to be factored in, and that certainly included how the finished building, car park etc would enhance and not detract from the surrounding area. QMAC Construction has been delivering

Generating the sort of reduced carbon footprint that might get a thumbs up from eco-warrior Greta Thunberg.

projects for nearly three decades and the quality of finish and exceeding the client's expectations continue to be our aim," Stephen McCaffrey continued.

QMAC has achieved a stunning success. Mayor of Antrim & Newtownabbey borough Council, Alderman John Smyth said: "Lough Neagh has been one of our borough's under-utilized assets and the purpose of this development (The Gateway Centre) is to attract more visitors and residents to the

Lough. I am delighted to see the progress that has been made." The result of QMAC's approach and delivery is a Gateway Centre that forms an outstanding centrepiece for the council's ongoing work.



## QMAC's commitment to the environment

'All projects are managed within the maximum level of consideration for the environment. We acknowledge that our business impacts on the environment, so we are totally committed to operating in an environmentally sustainable manner.'

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DOORWAYS HAS THE EXPERTISE TO PROVIDE A RANGE OF SOLUTIONS...

# Ironmongery

Doorways Architectural is a premier architectural solutions provider to the commercial, education, health, housing, retail and leisure sectors of the construction industry. Doorways Architectural ironmongery business has a long and established reputation in the Province. The roots of the business can be traced back to the 1870s and a company called “Joseph Blair” which operated as a hardware merchant out of Church Lane, Belfast. In 2005, the company rebranded as MB Architectural and relocated to Falcon Road, Belfast. Last year, the business merged with Moffett-Thallon to create the new entity of Doorways, a specialist doors and ironmongery division of the MacBlair group. Under this umbrella the Doorways Architectural division incorporates a fully operational access control department; an ASSA lock centre, as well as a full team of architectural ironmongers, schedulers and estimators. Best practice is widely considered

to mean only sourcing door ironmongery that is third party certified. All parts including doors, hinges, closers, locks, intumescent seals, panic hardware, door furniture, hold-open and free-swing devices and signage should all be third party approved to provide an assurance that these products are fit-for-purpose. Doorways can provide tailored solutions for each job, whether it is for an individual home or a major multi-door project. Staff have the experience to offer expert advice to clients while making sure that all certifications are adhered to without compromising on the architectural vision of the project. “It is important for us to be able to match in with the architect’s vision for a building while also considering the practical needs and the relevant regulations that need to be met,” said Doorways Sales Manager, Robert McNeill. “For the contractor, their needs are different from job to job and we work closely with them to



find out how best to deliver the products to site. We back this up with regular site visits and, where necessary, amend schedules to match their requirements. It’s all part of our partnership approach.”

## Ironmongery Projects

- Hillsborough Castle
- Killeavey Castle
- Portland 88 Apartments, Belfast
- Maldron Hotel - Newcastle
- Hampton Hilton - Edinburgh
- Sacred Heart Primary School

# Lock Centre

Doorway Architectural recognises that service is key in the provision of cylinders and master key systems. Having recently invested in a new in-house ASSA Lock Centre, lead times and exact client requirements can be achieved to suit the most demanding build programme. Doorways Architectural can supply Euro, UK, Scandinavian Oval, Round and Rim cylinders with a choice of pin

tumbler mechanisms to ensure convenience and security of the building is not compromised. The new on-site cylinder assembly facility enabled the Architectural Ironmongery department to ensure that jobs are turned around in a timely and professional manner. Doorways’ lock centre provides secure access solutions for professional companies, local authorities and schools.



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Lightherm's innovative aggregate goes through a range of specific processes that have allowed it to become a market leader for use in thermal bead and lightweight screeds. This exciting new product offers architects, developers and builders a great alternative to traditional methods of insulating both ground and upper floors. When mixed at a specific ratio with cement and water it becomes a lightweight thermal bead screed, with exceptional thermal and acoustic properties and has thermal conductivity values as low as 0.041 W/m.k. Once on-site, it is easily installed as it is a perfectly homogenous, jointless and flowable material, encapsulating pipe and duct work and enabling underfloor heating to reach its full potential.

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- Fixed price installation

The company began producing Lightherm in Northern Ireland in July 2019 and currently supplies to a number of concrete companies across the UK and ROI.

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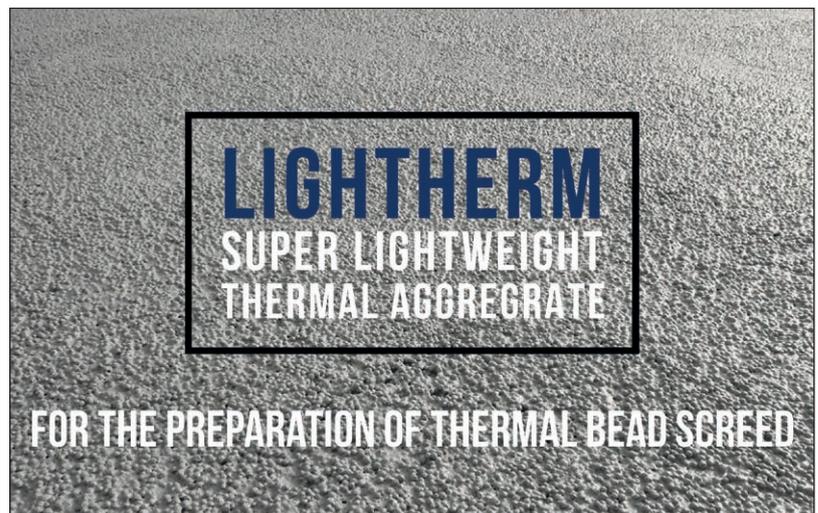
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SIMPSON STRONG-TIE OFFERS SOME ADVICE ON CHOOSING THE CORRECT MATERIALS FOR A PERFECT RENDER...

# Don't let Rusty ruin your render

**B**uilding recommendations outlined by NHBC and LABC only advocate the use of austenitic stainless steel or PVCu beads in all external rendering applications, everywhere in the UK. Galvanised steel beads are no longer accepted for external rendering in any situation.

Jon Head, Sales Director at Simpson Strong-Tie explains, "We only recommend the use of stainless steel or PVCu products for external applications. Galvanised steel beads should not be used externally, unless secondary protection against corrosion is provided.

Although it's generally known for its corrosion-resistant properties, galvanised steel can react with the chemical components in render, which will lead to quality issues, from unsightly rust stains, to the degradation of the beads and possible cracking in the render.

Simply put, galvanised steel in external rendering may rust, which will reduce the lifespan of your work and can be costly to put right. But the good news is it's easily avoided.

Stainless steel beads are specifically designed for cement-based renders, and our range of stainless-steel angle beads, bellcast beads, stop beads and movement beads, and the PVCu plastic alternative has been engineered to provide reinforcement and resist impact damage. Our range of beads makes bellcasts, corners, stops and abutments all easier to form, and they can be cut to size as required."

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## INDUSTRY NEWS

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This is our no equal commitment to provide Builders Merchants with the best service, best products and all the support they need. This information has been provided by the NHBC bead and external applications document 2019 & the LABC Tech Manual V8 2017.

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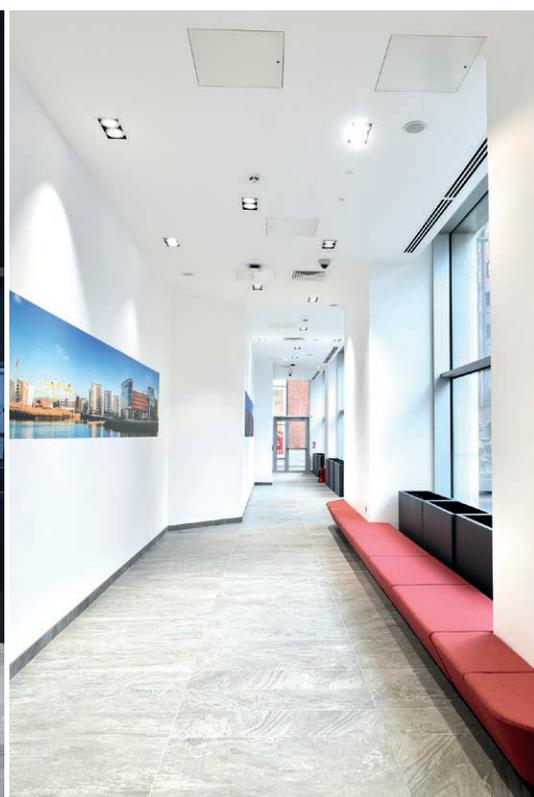
PROJECT

# Erskine House

BELFAST



## ERSKINE HOUSE - BELFAST



## FUTURE PROOF

TURNER & TOWNSEND BREAKS NEW GROUND AS THEY MANAGE THE FIT-OUT OF ERSKINE HOUSE, HMRC'S REGIONAL CENTRE IN BELFAST...

If you want evidence of a digital revolution in the construction industry, then look no further than Erskine House.

Part of the UK-wide estates transformation programme by HMRC that will see 170 separate offices consolidated into 13 regional centres, the eight-storey building in the heart of Belfast city centre is a case study in modern methods of construction and the art of collaboration.

Although HMRC's overarching aspiration is to be the most digitally advanced tax collection authority in the world, this colossal development project is also based on sound economics. With the lease on an ageing property portfolio (much of which was no longer fit for purpose) due to expire next year, this was the optimum time to act.

"Our Locations Programme is the key to HM Revenue & Customs' wider transformation," said Colin Casse, Director of the Estates Locations Programme. "By changing people's working environment with high quality regional centres, HMRC is helping to change how they work. This was a once-in-a-generation opportunity to look at how it operated and ensure HMRC was fit for the future. It also aligns with the wider Government strategy to have hubs in key locations close to public transport connections and local amenities, providing cutting-edge innovative environments to serve all four nations of the UK. "HMRC is on track to deliver savings of around £300 million up to 2025. It will deliver annual cash savings of £74 million in the tax year 2025 to 2026, rising to around £90 million from 2028."

## PROJECT TEAM...

**Client:** HMRC

**Developer:** Orby Investment Ltd

**Transformation Partner:**  
Turner & Townsend

**Project Manager:** Kevin McNaul

**Architect:** Todd Architects

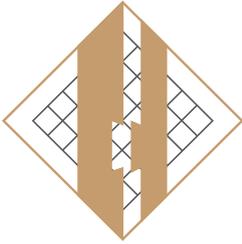
**Building Contractor:**  
Graham Construction

**Fit-Out Contractor:**  
Graham Interior Fit-Out

**M&E Consultant:**  
Caldwell Consulting



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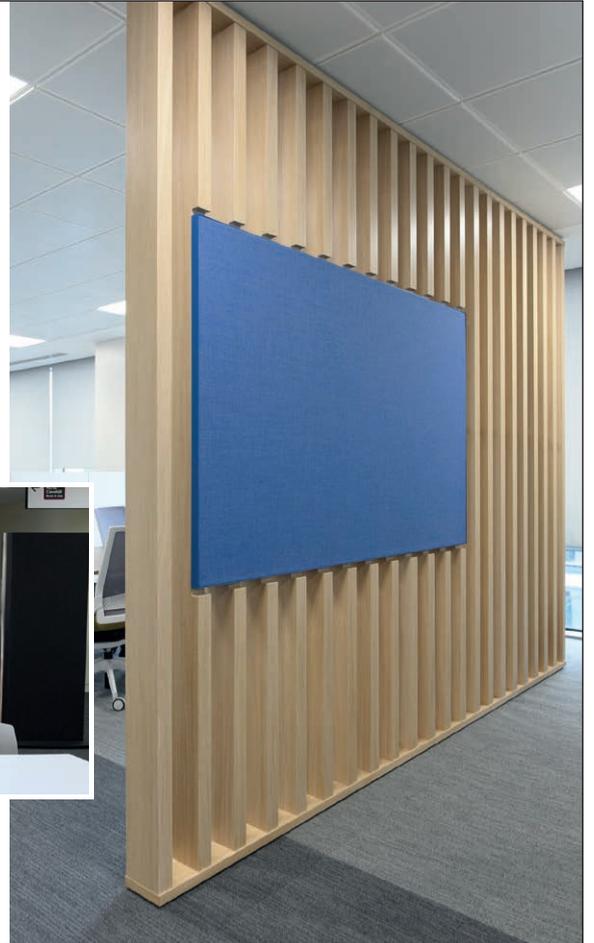
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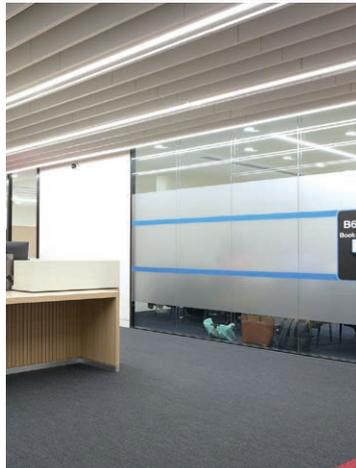
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THE ERSKINE HOUSE PROJECT

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## SEAMLESS TRANSITION

AS STAFF FROM GRAHAM WALKED OUT OF THE LIFT, STAFF FROM GRAHAM WALKED IN...

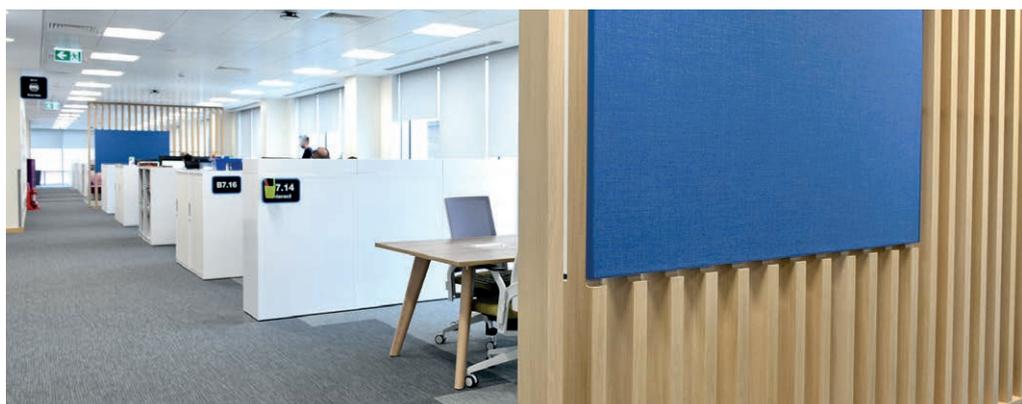
The site at the corner of Arthur Street and Chichester Street, originally home to a four-storey building and more recently a car park, was earmarked for developer Orby Investment Ltd who appointed TODD Architects and their competitively procured contractor, Graham Construction to construct the building. Turner & Townsend, alongside HMRC's project and implementation team, started engaging with the developer and the construction team in September 2017. "As soon as construction started on the base building, I took on an Assurance Project Manager role for HMRC," explained Turner & Townsend's Kevin McNaul. "making sure the developer was implementing the terms of the lease agreement, and ensuring the required standards were upheld by working closely with HMRC's technical advisor AECOM. Turner & Townsend is a key delivery partner for HMRC's Estate Transformation, providing programme management, project and cost management, and BIM/Technology

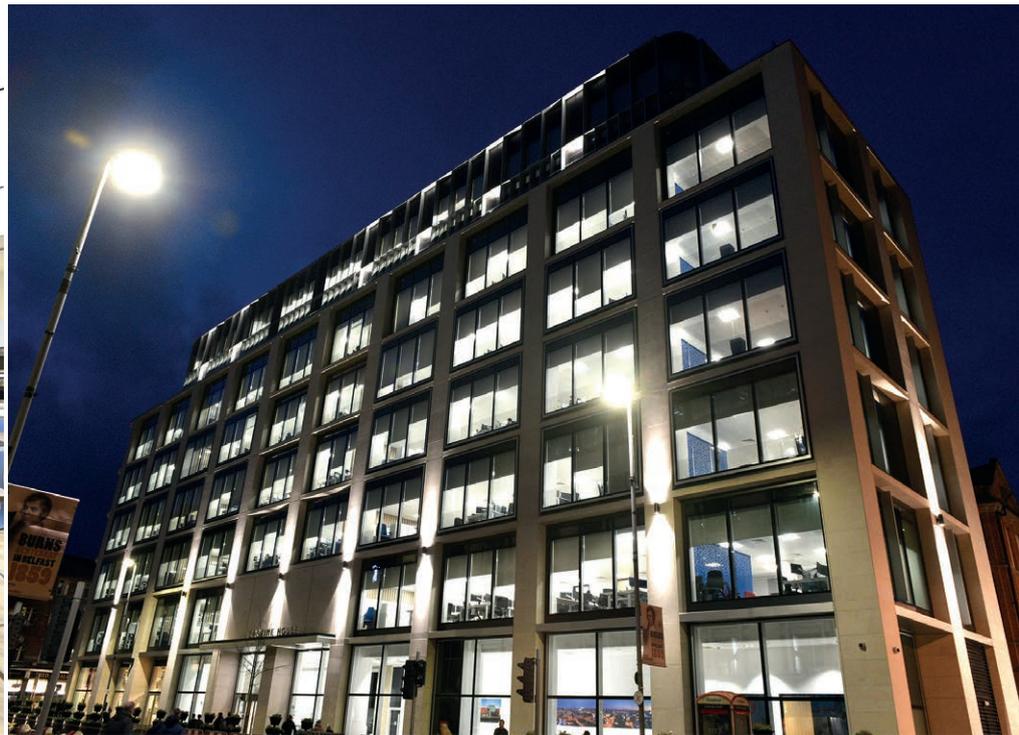
advice. It's actually the first Turner & Townsend real estate commission where every service capability has been applied to one client."

With the CAT A base building complete, it was the turn of the fit-out contractor to enter the fray. HMRC had developed a UK-wide framework for procuring fit-out, with the aim to drive efficiency and value. However, many of those contractors didn't have a presence in Northern Ireland, necessitating an alternate tendering process. "We undertook an

OJEU compliant procurement to appoint a contractor, a competitive process and fully transparent that resulted in Graham Fit Out being selected.

"Whilst there was a short delay due to issues with provision of permanent power connections, Graham Fit Out took over for CAT B just as Graham Fit Out were completing, leaving a clean break after CAT A completion. We managed to mitigate the effect of some lost time and achieve occupation in December 2019 on schedule," concluded Kevin.





## THE HOUSE THAT BIM BUILT

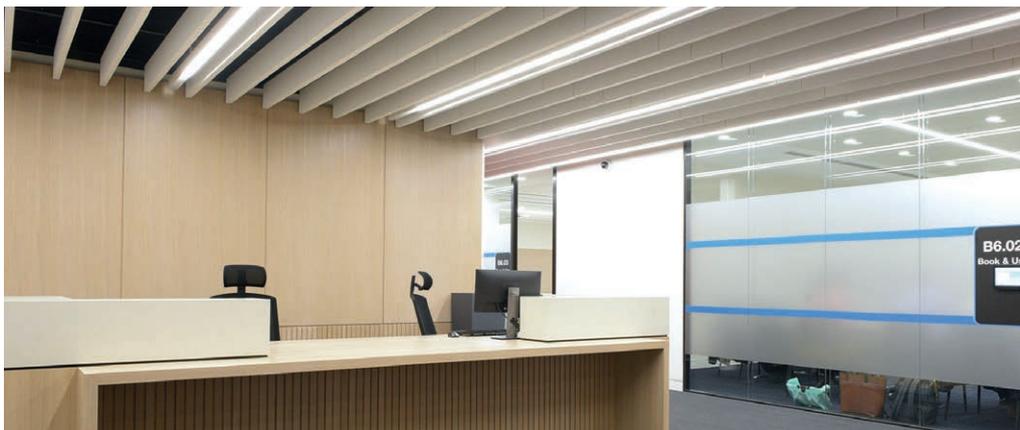
A CUTTING-EDGE CONSTRUCTION THANKS TO THE APPLIANCE OF SCIENCE...

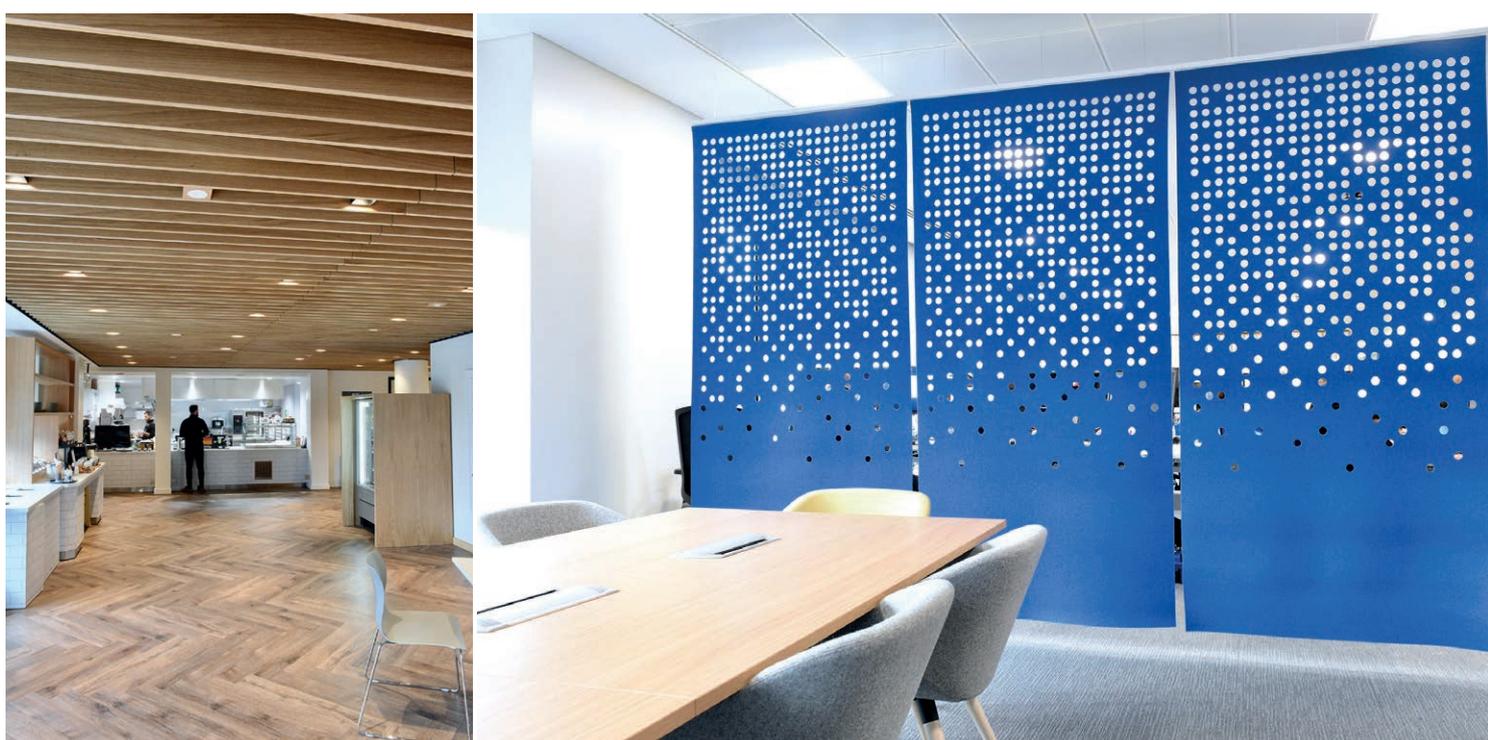
Any large scale construction project requires the communication of often complex information in a way that is both effective and efficient. Get it right and you save time, money, and more than a few sleepless nights. Embracing digital technologies and going with the (data) flow can help to transform builds. Erskine House is a case in point. “As a business, Turner & Townsend have invested heavily in transforming and digitizing our services,” said Kevin. “This includes collation and interpretation of ‘big data’ which helped us advise HMRC on the cost of delivering a major fit out in Belfast and informed wider programme estimating.”

BIM has also been the digital technology of choice at Graham Fit-Out. Project Manager Gavin Cullen explained: “BIM is something our Construction & Civil division has been using for some time although it was relatively new to fit-out. Straight away the benefits are clear. Being able

to run clash detection workshops at design stage saved valuable time and money when it came to construction stage. The technology also allowed us to carry out virtual reality tours, we held BIM workshops on site that allowed HMRC staff to walk around the finished building months before our completion date. This gave them a real insight for how the finished product would look and feel. As HMRC were still fine-tuning their requirements for the office space,

some change was inevitable. This was another occasion when digital technology came into its own. “Rather than waiting until the actual fit out, we ascertained what HMRC wanted, made early impact assessment and supplied them with the information to make an informed decision,” added Kevin. “That very robust change control process was a key success factor in delivering the project on time and within budget.”





## THINKING OF THE FUTURE

THE ERSKINE HOUSE PROJECT WAS ABOUT LESSONS LEARNED, AND LESSONS SHARED...

Not only did Erskine House demonstrate how BIM and management software tools can positively affect the construction process, it also influences reporting and future building maintenance. “Traditionally the Project Manager would collate disparate pieces of information and fashion them into a monthly report. Across the programme, a Common Data Environment is used to store files, allow live revisions and is accessible to the project team - this included Cost Management, Risk Management and Change Control tools. A digitized reporting approach meant that at any point in time a live and accurate dashboard report could be generated at the touch of a button in an easy to read format. “Our Project, Cost and BIM Managers participated in a regular knowledge sharing ‘lessons learned’ process

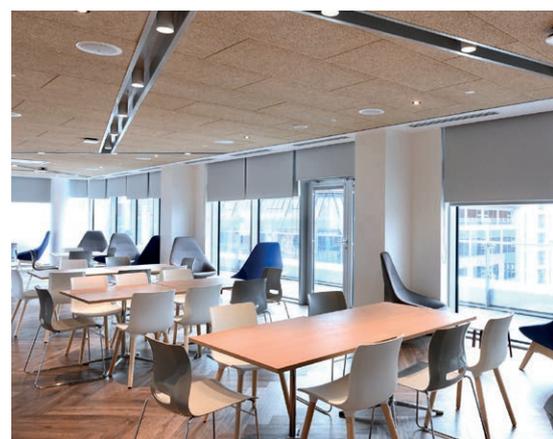
“This storage of accessible data and asset information is the gift that keeps on giving.”

across the programme. We share best practice, providing suggestions on templates and tools that can drive consistency of approach on the remaining projects. “We do live cost tracking, live risk management, we used a web based data environment so everybody involved in the project and overall programme has the same folder structure and the same information instantly to hand. “Early in the process, we identified the need to further develop management tools based on lessons learned at Croydon (the first new HMRC hub) and Bristol.”

This storage of accessible data and asset information is the gift that keeps on giving - even long after completion.

“HMRC are really challenging how they manage their estate to drive efficiency and demonstrate value for money. A key element of this

is the building asset information contained in the BIM models. The level of information being recorded and the use of a central information storage strategy means HMRC and their Facilities Management providers will have access to all of that at their fingertips. They will know asset numbers, locations, ages, maintenance history and be able to plan improved maintenance regimes, and when it needs maintained.”





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## ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE

HMRC WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE THE MOVE TO A CENTRAL HUB LESS TAXING FOR THEIR STAFF...

You'd be forgiven for thinking that HMRC's Erskine House project is the cutting edge of a digital construction revolution, all data driven, cold and calculated. Nothing could be further from the truth.

HMRC staff, the 60,000 people (and in Northern Ireland's case 1600) moving from regional offices to central hubs, were very much at the forefront of thinking.

Director of the Estates Locations Programme, Colin Casse explains "In 2015, we announced that HMRC aimed to bring its employees together in 13 large, modern offices, making it easier to collaborate and work flexibly. The aim is to relocate civil servants from existing, often fragmented office locations, to modern, cross-departmental workplaces which will be great places to work, making the most of emerging working practices and technology."

HMRC's Stakeholder Engagement team ensured they took on board information about staff and their regions to make sure they could help shape the overall

design. "We turned images from a staff photographic competition into digital graphics, and there are large visuals of the mountains of Mourne, Carrickfergus Castle, Belfast City and Fermanagh - images representative of where staff came from to provide a connection," said Graham Fit Out's Project Manager Gavin Cullen.

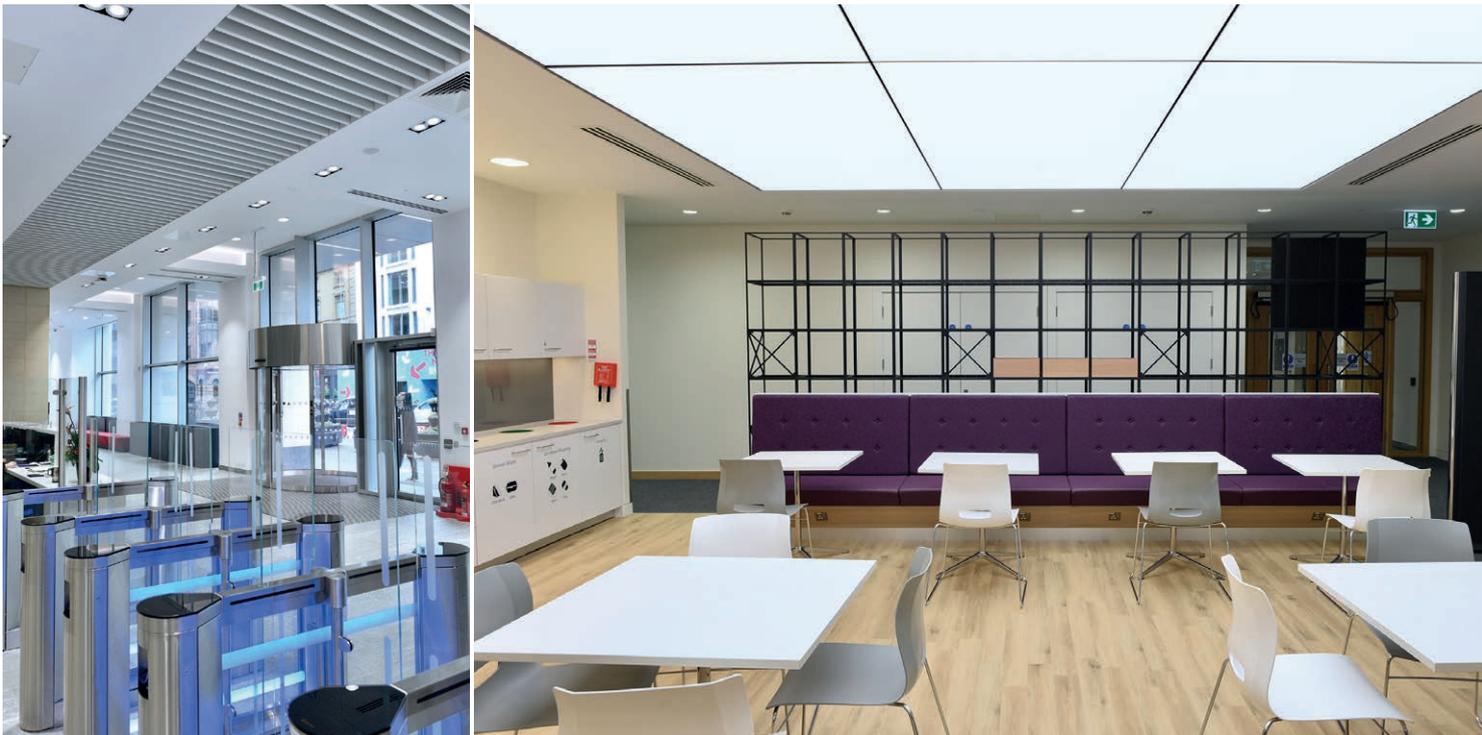
Importantly, HMRC also set up a Design and User Experience team to ensure it listened to staff, improving design based on staff feedback from HMRC's earlier regional centres.

The innovative approach and high specification fit out presented its own set of challenges. The base structure in Belfast was designed before HMRC's Inclusive Design Guide (IDG) was finalized. This guide captures HMRC's requirements to support their ambition to make this the most accessible workplace and property estate in government.

Gavin continues: "The IDG goes over and above what Building Control requires and affects many elements, from

increasing door widths to make them more inclusive and accessible, Gender Neutral toilet facilities, or improving wayfinding for visually impaired staff. Considering the needs of a diverse range of staff with both visible and unseen disabilities underpins the Guide and its ambitions. It really is very forward thinking and is setting a marker across both private and public workspaces." Staff development and putting people first also meant a strong emphasis on collaborative areas, break-out zones, meeting and lecture rooms, plus a sophisticated audio-visual provision - all to BIM Level 2 Mandate, Considerate Constructors Scheme Excellent, and BREEAM Excellent standard.





## SETTING THE STANDARD

TRANSFORMING HOW GOVERNMENT WORKS, AND ALSO HOW GOVERNMENT INTERACTS WITH THE CITY OF BELFAST...

**E**rskine House may well become an example of best practice in how to construct a cutting-edge, high-quality and 'smart' building. The Belfast Regional Centre is certainly going to influence and support the successful delivery of the remaining HMRC regional centres. One of the key successes has been collaboration. "HMRC has lots of different stakeholder groups, some with experience of construction and others without," said Kevin. "We collectively acknowledged this and recognised

the value that these parties could bring to the project and created a collaborative working environment based on shared goals. This meant bringing the expertise of HMRC's Consultant Team and Graham Fit Out with their supply chain to design and deliver an affordable project that met the challenging expectations of HMRC."

Timing was part of the challenge, with HMRC committing to a soft landing for their staff starting in December 2019, and the arrival of 200 employees per day from January 8, 2020. "Having lost that time earlier in the project, we had occupation the day after practical completion", added Kevin. "The fact that this was possible, with no issues, is down to our working relationship with Graham Fit-Out and the very early engagement of the HMRC team in readying for a seamless occupation."

"It was a high-end specification in a short delivery time, but collaboration with the wider design team and local

supply chain allowed us to identify and agree solutions to any problems that did arise. It was this proactive approach that enabled us to deliver on time," said Gavin Cullen. For Turner & Townsend this has been a pioneering project that continues to receive praise. "The planning, construction and fit out of Belfast Regional Centre has been tremendous, and HMRC staff are currently enjoying the new building and all of its exceptional facilities." HMRC now has 1600 employees growing accustomed to their new surroundings, and bringing benefit to Belfast. While HMRC continues to support its people with accessible parking needs, no parking at Erskine House encourages sustainable transport use, and a modest grab 'n' go food provision in the building encourages spend in city centre eateries - all in keeping with a government not only transforming how it works, but how it interacts with its surroundings.



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doubling the area for a one-off cost." "EGGER OSB HDX is wider, lighter and stronger than conventional 38mm boards, as well as having higher load points and UDLs." "This innovative product can help businesses make significant savings on time and cost by using fewer materials and laying floors quicker." "The boards' low swelling properties also mean it's less likely to pick up moisture which can lead to uneven floors. Another benefit for installers is it's easy to fit. With a tongue and groove profile on the two long edges, the panels are laid the same way as 38mm chipboard." EGGER OSB HDX is a 2400 x 675 board which has a tongue and groove on the two long edges. Compared to a typical 38mm chipboard equivalent (600mm



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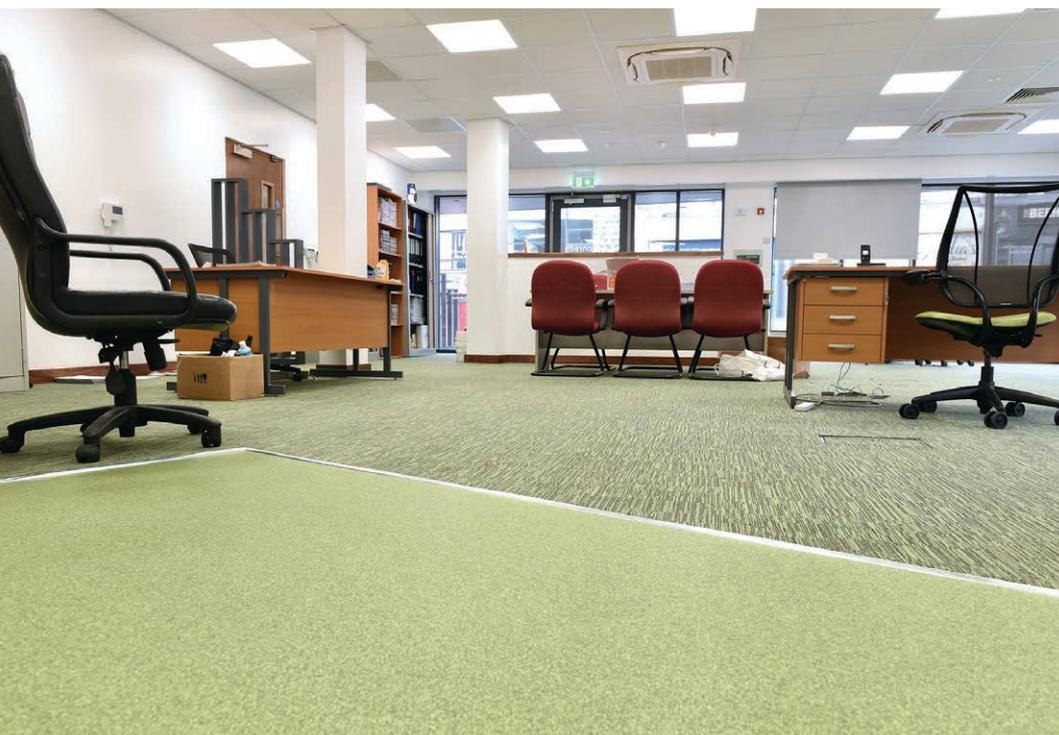
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# Áras na bhFál - Irish Language Centre

BELFAST





## NEW FLAGSHIP BUILDING

MAIN CONTRACTOR CANAVAN CONSTRUCTION LTD COMPLETES COMPLEX WEST BELFAST BUILD...

When you've been involved in the industry as long as Denis Canavan you've pretty much seen, and overcome, just about every conceivable construction challenge. So when the boss man of award-winning company Canavan Construction Ltd tells you something is a 'first', you know it must be out of the ordinary.

Back in September 2018, work began on a new flagship building for Irish-medium education. Developed by Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta (InaG), the trust fund for Irish language schools, the £2m Áras na bhFál project was the latest addition to West Belfast's burgeoning Gaeltacht Quarter.

The irony will not be lost on Denis, and particularly Project Manager Brendan Canavan, that the name Falls Road means 'territory of the enclosures'. For it was space, or rather the lack of it, that created many of the project's greatest challenges.

Situated at the junction of the Falls

Road and Broadway, the proposed four-storey structure left little room for manoeuvre and required some serious brainstorming to find a workable alternative to the customary heavy mobile crane.

"The building was the exact footprint of the site," Denis explained. "That resulted in the daily challenge of getting men and materials onto a site with little or no storage area when you're working on the busiest road in West Belfast that has a constant flow of traffic to places like the Royal Victoria Hospital.

"You try and plan for every eventuality at the tender stage, but it can be difficult to predict completely what will work until you try it. It didn't take long to realise that using a mobile crane parked on the street was never going to be a long-term option, so we had to take a more unconventional approach. In the end, we came up with the idea of constructing a crane inside the lift shaft area, something I've never had to do before."

## PROJECT TEAM...

**Client:** Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta

**Main Contractor:** Canavan Construction Ltd

**Architect:** ARdMackel Architects/  
Paul McAlister Architects

**Quantity Surveyor:** Griffin Hughes

**Structural Engineer:**  
George Dawson Ltd

**Project Manager:** Brendan Canavan

**Mechanical Contractor:**  
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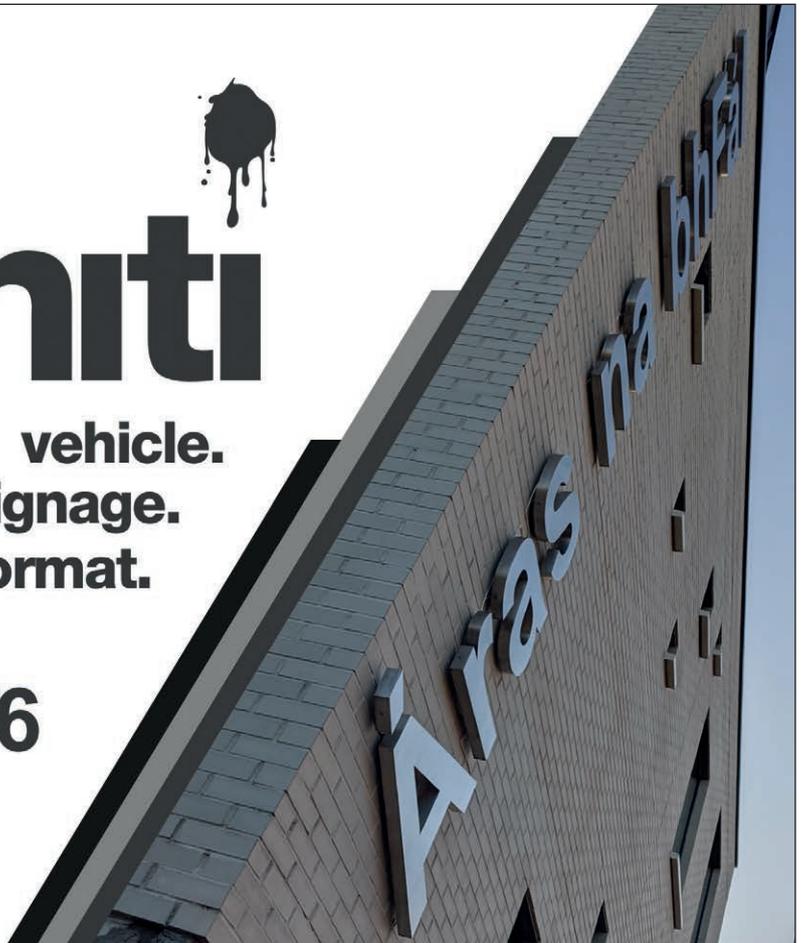
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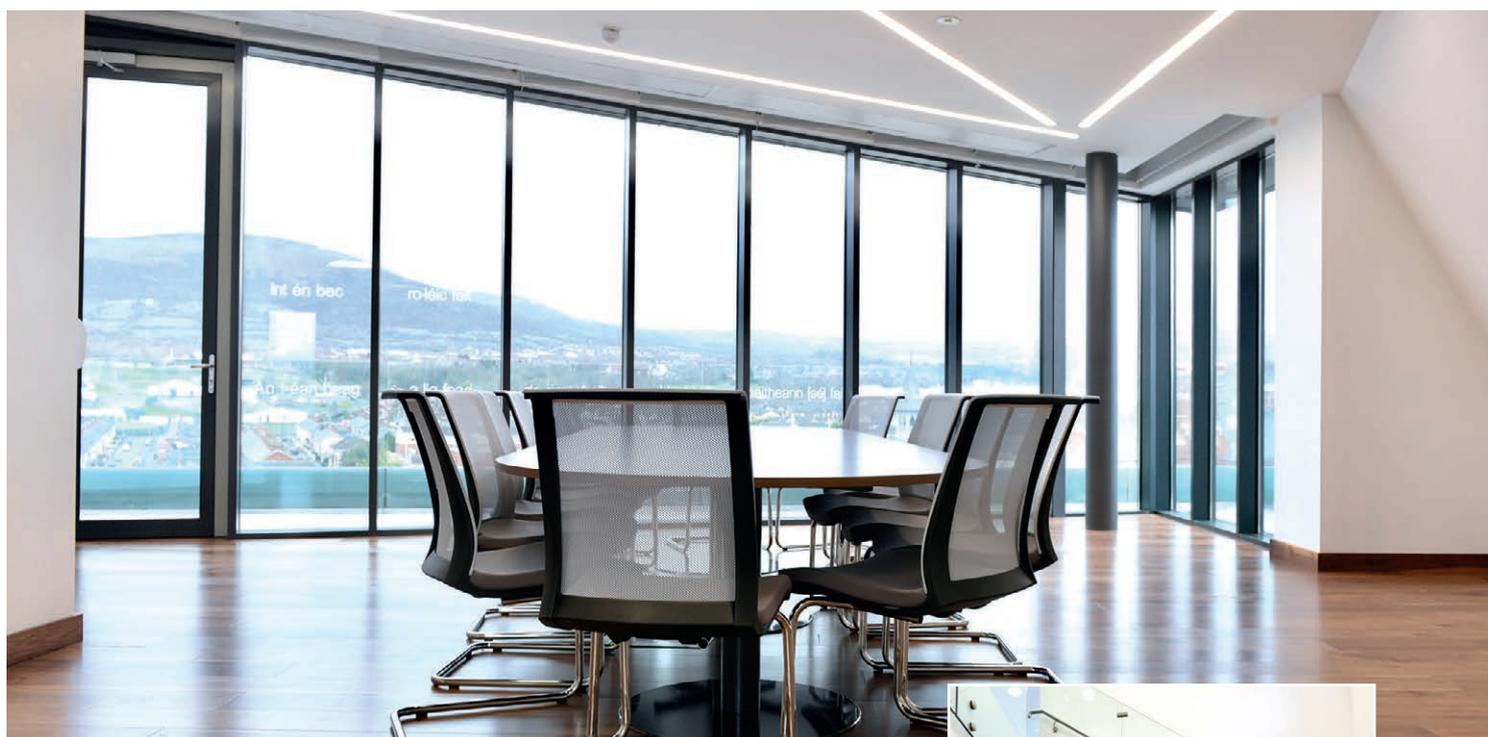
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## ROOM WITH A VIEW

THE COMPLEXITY OF ÁRAS NA bhFÁL'S DESIGN AND BUILD IS NOT ALWAYS APPARENT TO THE NAKED EYE...

Donning a cap to the Big Apple's Broadway district, the distinctive design of Áras na bhFál displays the same creative energy that characterises Manhattan. It may be a new home and focal point for the continued resurgence of an ancient Irish medium, but the building itself is very much of this time. Modernity takes centre stage with an eye-catching angular aesthetic. The steel frame may have been traditional, but the design's numerous splays and turns meant bringing the architect's vision to life was a complex process. "This was a very unique design," added Denis. "There were many bespoke elements, like the brickwork outer skin. The upper storeys were clad in zinc. From our point of view it required more specialist tradesmen than most projects." Perhaps the most complicated element of the works centred around the third and fourth floor, the latter housing a conference room,

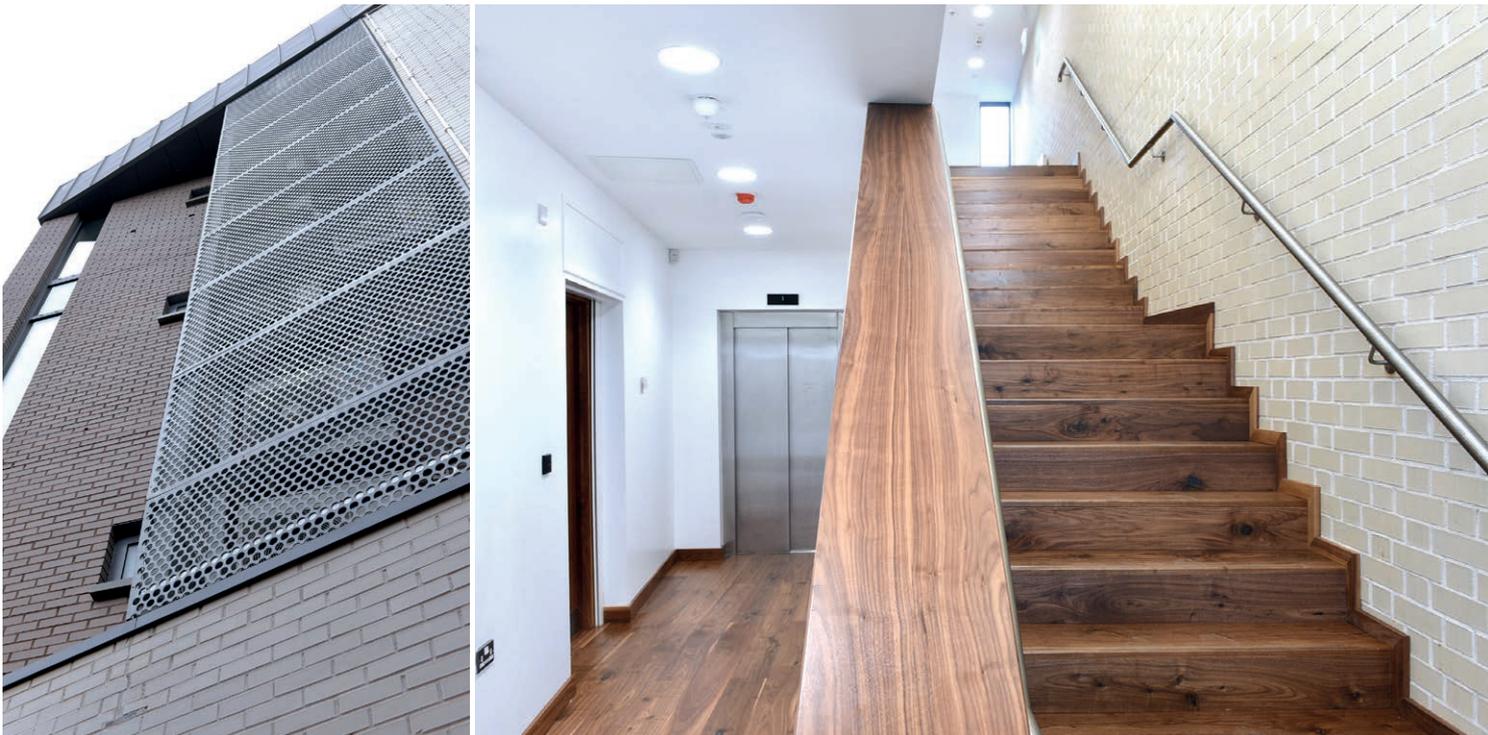
external balcony with full height glazed curtain walling, and stunning views of the Belfast Hills. It's a room that somehow manages to convey simplicity when the architecture is anything but.

Once the site of three small interconnecting properties, this visually striking new building now boasts three floors of Irish language workspace and a ground floor with its own street access level. "Áras na bhFál is a fabulous addition to Belfast's growing Gaeltacht Quarter," enthused Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta Chief Executive, Pilib Ó Ruanaí. "The building provides state-of-the-art workspace for a number of companies that deliver services in Irish to the community and educational sectors throughout the north. It replaces a site that was derelict for a long time and makes a statement about the ambition of the Irish language, as a tool for economic, educational and cultural regeneration."



"The steel frame may have been traditional, but the design's numerous splays and turns meant bringing the architect's vision to life was a complex process."





## COLLABORATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

CANAVAN CONSTRUCTION LTD DELIVERS THE CHALLENGING ÁRAS NA bhFÁL PROJECT ON TIME AND WITHIN BUDGET...

**D**enis Canavan admits to breathing a sigh of relief on completion of the Áras na bhFál building. Not that he wasn't confident in his workforce delivering, it was more the realisation that this was a special project.

"It's a landmark site. It's also a very important building for the local community. Add into the equation the tight site, at times complex design, and a series of challenges that had to be overcome, and this is a building that wasn't easy to construct, and one Canavan Construction takes great pride in."

The use of 3D modelling helped the design team visualise how the details would integrate with the structural steelwork. It was then a case of ensuring what was viewed on the computer screen could be translated into something tangible. Denis is adamant that one of the major

contributing factors to the venture's success was collaboration.

"It was a really good team, with a really good vibe. The meetings between the client, design team and ourselves were open and honest, with a willingness on all sides to understand and be sympathetic to any issues that arose. Aside from

"Denis is adamant that one of the major contributing factors to the venture's success was collaboration."

the completed building, that working relationship with all parties was a real highlight of this project." Áras na bhFál now takes its place alongside a refurbished Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich, St Mary's College, Raidió Fáilte's new studios, and a re-development of Coláiste Feirste in a vibrant Gaeltacht Quarter. It also takes its place in Canavan Construction Ltd's extensive portfolio of work and long list of satisfied customers.

"The construction project was completed on time to an excellent standard, on budget, and with minimum disruption to

our neighbours," added Pilib Ó Ruanáí. "The site was extremely constrained, bordering a bus lane on a busy main road. However, Canavan Construction made light of the challenges to complete the job and we have a lot to thank them for as we carry out our daily work in this bright, ultra-modern building."



### Built to last...

Canavan Construction Ltd was established in 1999 by Denis Canavan. The company manages a broad spectrum of projects, encompassing new build, refurbishment, restoration, maintenance, residential, commercial, industrial, community, public sector, and property development. The RSUA Design Award, and the RICS Award (both for Office Development) are just two of the innumerable industry accolades that have been bestowed on the respected Mid-Ulster company.



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# **Laydex** Building Solutions

## ROOFING DIVISION



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