



MEDIA RELEASE

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Lancaster Circus refurb completes 20 weeks early

A redeveloped office in central Birmingham was officially opened this week completing 20 weeks ahead of schedule, saving £340k.

The £23m refurbishment of 1 Lancaster Circus by Wates Construction was completed in 72 weeks and saw the council building increase employee occupancy from 800 to 2,000.

Working alongside Birmingham City Council's Urban Design and Property Services divisions, Wates was able to achieve this early completion by rescheduling the project to be meticulously restored in two phases as opposed to three.

The firm's commitment to local labour and local spend also meant that 93% of monies spent were with local businesses and 120 jobs were sustained over the life of the project.

The five-storey building remained in use throughout the construction programme. Staff were decanted from floor to floor as work was carried out to avoid any impact upon efficiency.

The building has now become the location for one of the UK's largest ever chilled beam installations with 179 on each floor. This formed part of a huge overhaul of building services in order to make the property more energy efficient.

In addition, Wates carefully cleaned and repaired the limestone cladding façade and replaced 527 windows to enhance the building's appearance.

Phil Harrison, Wates Construction's Managing Director for the North and Midlands said: "This was a challenging project for us given the building's city location and the innovative construction methods that were required to ensure minimal impact upon the building's occupants. The fact that we were able to accommodate these constraints and still

complete the project under budget and ahead of schedule is a fantastic achievement and even better that our presence proved to be beneficial to the local economy.”

Cllr Randal Brew, Cabinet Member for Finance at Birmingham City Council, said: “The refurbished 1 Lancaster Circus is one of the cornerstones of our improved Central Administrative Buildings estate.

“In order to deliver first-class services for the citizens of Birmingham, it is essential that our employees have an effective working environment.

“We now have that at this site, which gives us a base from which we can embrace modern technologies and working styles to deliver the most efficient services possible to the people of Birmingham.”

The 1 Lancaster Circus project was undertaken as part of Birmingham City Council’s Working for the Future programme, one of nine Business Transformation programmes being delivered in partnership with Service Birmingham. This programme is proposing to transform the council’s property portfolio to deliver efficient, flexible and fit for purpose workplaces.

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For further information please contact Lisa Margis on 0161 233 1811 or 07748 301 005

Notes to Editors

Wates is one of the UK’s largest family-owned construction services and development companies. Established in 1897, it remains privately owned by the Wates Family. Wates employs over 2000 people and had a turnover of £945 million in 2009. www.wates.co.uk

The company works across a range of sectors, including education, prisons, affordable housing, retail fit out and refurbishment, office interiors, land development and commercial buildings.

Wates has three areas of Corporate Responsibility focus: to reduce the impact of CO2 emissions from our activities, eliminate all non-hazardous waste to landfill by 2010 and boost skills and employability in areas of most need. Wates was awarded Silver status in the 2008 Business in the Community Responsible Business index.