

Piries Place

Horsham, UK



View of Hotel and Cinema beyond Existing Carfax Facades

Client	Reef Group
Value	£11m
Size (GIA)	Approx. 9,000 m2

Sensitive Town Centre Regeneration and Placemaking Through a Contemporary Interpretation of the Local Architectural Heritage

The Piries Place development, in Horsham Town Centre, comprises of a part new build, part refurbishment mixed use scheme which will reinvigorate the town by providing a 92 bedroom Premier Inn hotel, an Everyman 3-screen cinema, restaurants and cafes and office accommodation, clustered around a revitalized public realm and landscape design.

The project is intended to compliment the town and the surrounding uses, with significant effort made to develop a contextual architectural expression that 'fits in' using quality craftsmanship and a contemporary interpretation of the local vernacular.



Public realm between new build hotel and refurbished blocks



Façade detail on north block



Stepped massing and terraces



Architectural treatment of cinema volume to reduce apparent mass



North block seen from courtyard

The Story So Far

The Piries Place site has fantastic potential, situated adjacent to the Horsham Town Centre conservation area and the local historic market square. Rich in character, the town still maintains some of its medieval street patterns and high quality buildings of various architectural periods are dotted throughout.

The site itself was recently purchased by British Airways Pensions Trustees Ltd., who with developers Reef Group, have a vision to create a leisure led destination which will compliment the surrounding townscape by providing a variety of units of varying sizes and uses and offer anchor units in the Premier Inn hotel and the Everyman cinema.

The design team undertook solar studies, assessments of constraints and opportunities as well as detailed massing studies to ensure key views would positively fit into the townscape and not overpower the local context. Indeed, to respect key views from historic market square, the ridge line of the original, existing principal building on site became a datum level which was not to be exceeded, even as 3NO. new cinema screens were inserted.

During the early design process, numerous Pre-Application meetings were held and over time a very positive working relationship was developed between the project team and the local authority planners as well as various local stakeholder groups. Profiting from the knowledge of various local community groups that were invited to public consultation events and a public open day, the design team came to understand key sensitivities and as a result, implemented significant improvements to the scheme.

The overarching design ethos features a contemporary interpretation of the local vernacular, and was developed with reference to various details present within the surrounding streets, adding a fresh, modern take on the local context. The materiality of the scheme is restrained, featuring a local, dark stock brick (to match existing brickwork on site), a cream brick, bronze coloured metalwork (featured in cornices, architraves, glazing surrounds and metal slats) and clay tile roofs. Visual interest is added by means of subtle but dramatic massing, stepped brickwork details and profiled metalwork, leading to a play of light and shadow on the façade.

A key sustainability driver was to re-use as much as possible of the existing building stock on site, whilst undertaking major refurbishment works and new build additions to create a fantastic sense of place, provide contemporary, marketable units that could attract the Premier Inn and Everyman anchor tenants and satisfy the spatial requirements of a variety of tenancy / occupancy types. Of the 8,600 m² of tenant space provided, over 4,400m² is situated within light or heavy refurbishment building elements. Only the hotel building on site is entirely new build.

The scheme has so far received very positive feedback from locals, both in conversation and on social media. The Everyman cinema with its first floor terrace has been trading even better than expected and is rapidly becoming well loved within the town. The Premier Inn, recently opened, enjoys a high degree of use.

Ground floor restaurants and cafes started to occupy their exterior areas for alfresco dining and the central portion of the square holds a magnolia tree, benches and zones for temporary market stalls. The existing and locally significant sculpture of "Piries' Donkey" has been retained and repositioned and has again become a favourite play area for youngsters.