



## Admiral House

Admiral House creates regeneration in Newport

**Client:** Admiral Group

**Location:** Newport, Wales

**Project Value:** £12M (Cat A) £3M (Cat B)

Holder Mathias Architects were approached initially by Scarborough Development group to respond with them to an open call by Admiral Insurance Group to propose sites to re-house their current Newport operations. As joint owners of the Cambrian Centre, a run-down '80s shopping centre opposite Newport's Railway Station, the call was seen by Scarborough Development as an opportunity to regenerate the ailing development by introducing a high density workplace development into the site offer.

Previously based on a business park on the outskirts of the city, Admiral Group were keen to provide a more central base of operations. This was both to provide a more visible presence as one of the region's major employers, and in order to provide their staff with more convenient and social facilities that come with being in a commercial city centre environment. As the Cambrian Centre offered both, it was put onto a short list of preferred sites.

As the design of the scheme developed, it became apparent that the considerations of workplace atmosphere and staff wellbeing were a key aspect of Admiral's tenant brief to provide a work place for up to 1200 staff. These aspirations however had to be balanced carefully with the developer's requirement to stick to a strict budget in order to allow them to offer competitive rents. Holder Mathias managed to develop a scheme which met

"We are happy to recommend Holder Mathias Architects. They provide quality work at a fair price. They are clear in their communications, and are helpful in resolving problems. They have the capacity to build large scale projects and are well organised making sure that they meet their schedules."

Admiral Insurance Head of Property, Huw Llewellyn



both the developer and tenant briefs by creating an efficient large floor-plate scheme based around a central atrium which tied together the social break-out spaces provided for staff. This was designed as an anchor to new associated retail/A3 uses focused around a new urban plaza.

The triangular site and the social work ethos of Admiral Group led to a scheme focussed around a central triangular atrium. This allowed for large areas of relatively regular 12m deep floor plate along two wings, with a slightly shallower third side facing into the atrium only. The layout allowed for the use of only two escape staircases to serve the building, though these were each over-sized to accommodate the required occupational density. A third accommodation staircase was designed into the atrium to link the café on the ground floor to each of the break-out spaces on the upper levels, turning the atrium into the social heart of the building.

With planning consent granted, Holder Mathias, now novated to contractors SDC Building Ltd, worked closely to develop and deliver the scheme. Together with the contractor, innovative building methods, such as the completely off-site manufactured unitised curtain wall cladding system. This solution saved the contractor significant programme time, as well as offering savings on construction access requirements. At the same time, the proposed solution also offered a much superior finish and improved maintenance requirements to the developer and tenant.

As a result, the building was completed ahead of schedule in May 2014, with the remainder of the scheme complete by August that year.

In the wider context of the city, the development has been a catalyst to the regeneration of a rundown part of Newport and created a new modern and forward-looking first impression of the city to people arriving by public transport. It has seen a boost in local confidence and pride, showing that Newport has the ability to attract quality inward investment, reversing an unfortunate trend in recent years of jobs and shops leaving the city.

