

News

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Blue Peter marks the start of pioneering net zero in operation office building

Plot A3 – as it is currently known – will boast Europe’s largest living wall at 4,000 sqm (43,055 sq ft) and the second largest in the world.

Developer The English Cities Fund (ECF), scheme partners and contractor, Bowmer + Kirkland, celebrated the start of construction at the unique 115,000 sq ft office building, which will set the bar for sustainable development and be the first in the region to meet the UK Green Building Council’s (UKGBC) ‘net zero’ in operation targets, and Blue Peter was there to capture the moment on film.

This groundbreaking 11-storey building with ground-floor retail - that will operate solely on renewable energy - has been designed by renowned architects, Make Architects, using UKGBC’s Design for Performance standard and will sit on a gateway plot opposite Two New Bailey. The scheme aims to be the standard-bearer in environmentally-conscious development, wellbeing and is committing to be verified using the NABERS UK ratings system. Plot A3 has also been selected as a London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) Pioneer.

An inclusive, whole-life approach to sustainability has been implemented to make sure the building will be as resource efficient as possible, with enhanced insulation in line with the Passivehaus standard; improved ventilation; air source heat pump to provide low-carbon heating and cooling, with CO2 heat pumps to provide highly energy-efficient hot water.

Partners also completed an early-stage carbon assessment to make sure the scheme eliminated waste, and will be built using sustainable materials where possible, such as recycled steel for reinforcement, 50% cement replacement for the substructure and 30% cement replacement for the superstructure.

What will stand the building apart from others is its living façade, which at 4,000sqm will be the largest in Europe and the second largest in the world. This unique skin that will envelope the building, will include a range of plants from evergreen species such as Saracococca Confusa to Hyssopus Officinalis, which will be a source of nectar for bees. The façade will bloom throughout the year and has been designed to remove air pollutants including carbon, reduce urban temperatures, while offering thermal benefits to occupiers and importantly delivering a net gain in the biodiversity of the area. In addition, the façade will provide a range of health benefits, with the scheme designed to enhance occupier health, wellbeing, productivity and will embrace the WELL Building Standard principles.

Phil Marsden, projects director at ECF, said: “We’re proud to welcome Blue Peter’s Mwaksy and partners to New Bailey and start the construction on what we firmly believe will be an iconic scheme here in Salford. As a business we’re committed to leading from the front and do our bit to tackle the climate crisis, building back better than ever and developing sustainable schemes that deliver direct benefits to the community.

“We have an obligation in the sector to leave a long-lasting, positive legacy for the next generation, driving investment, opportunities and prosperity right into the heart of Salford and beyond, while responding to the demand for high-quality office space that promotes agile working,

active travel and colleague wellbeing. We're looking forward to working with partners to bring our collective vision to life."

Salford Youth Mayor Rose Palmer said: "It is fantastic to see first-hand the start of this pioneering net zero scheme here in Salford.

"I'm so proud this new building will have ultra-low energy use and I can't wait to see Europe's biggest living wall when it is fully created. It is very exciting to have this all happening on our doorstep.

"And a big thank you goes to Blue Peter for joining us at the scheme. Climate change and environmental issues are areas of great concern and we have been working hard at Salford Youth Council to raise awareness and campaign for a cleaner, greener future for all."

Paul Sykes, regional director at Bowmer + Kirkland, said: "We are delighted to be continuing our long-lasting and successful partnership with ECF and the city of Salford, to deliver what will be our fifth best-in-class office development together at New Bailey. As a company, Bowmer + Kirkland understand and promote our responsibilities to deliver environmentally and socially sustainable developments, leading the industry in pioneering the latest standards and innovations in net zero carbon and social value."

"Plot A3 is a tremendously exciting scheme of 'firsts' and one that Bowmer + Kirkland is proud to be involved in. Together with partners, we will not only set a benchmark for sustainable high-quality office space for the North West and beyond, but we will also directly benefit local people and businesses through our commitments to creating employment opportunities, apprenticeships, community engagement and social mobility."

The £1bn Salford Central masterplan is being delivered by The English Cities Fund, a joint venture between Muse Developments, Legal & General and Homes England, in partnership with Salford City Council. The long-term partnership is currently delivering some of the most complex and most successful urban regeneration projects across the UK. Following ECF's expansion in 2018, it continues to take on large-scale, challenging sites and create inspiring new places.

Building on the ECF's success at Salford Central, it was named by Salford Council and the University of Salford as their chosen development partner to take forward Salford Crescent - a £2.5bn, 240-acre programme of regeneration delivered through a unique partnership that will bring forward a new city district with thousands of homes, alongside innovation and education space, as well as swathes of green public space.

Cushman and Wakefield and JLL are the joint lettings agents on the New Bailey scheme.