

News

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Salford Central office committed to being 'net zero in operation' gets green light

Planners at Salford City Council have given the green light to The English Cities Fund's unique 115,000 sq ft office building, that will set the benchmark for sustainable commercial development. The building has been designed to be ultra-low energy and achieve the UKGBC's 2035-2050 office energy performance targets. Committing to verify its operational performance using the new NABERS UK rating scheme.

The new fossil-fuel free building – that will run solely on 100% good-quality renewable electricity – has been designed using the Design for Performance standard aimed at bridging the performance gap and will see an 11-storey building with ground-floor retail delivered on a gateway plot opposite Two New Bailey. Designed by Make Architects – the architectural practice behind the Three New Bailey and Four New Bailey office buildings – the scheme looks to be the standard-bearer in promoting environmentally-conscious development and wellbeing.

A holistic approach to sustainability was taken to make sure the building improved resource efficiency, with enhanced insulation in line with the Passivhaus standard; enhanced ventilation; air source heat pump to provide low-carbon heating, hot water and cooling.

During the design stage of the scheme's inception, partners undertook early-stage whole life and upfront embodied carbon assessments to eliminate waste and reduce the building's whole carbon footprint. The scheme will use sustainable materials where possible, such as recycled steel for reinforcement, 50% cement replacement for the substructure and 30% cement replacement for the superstructure. Resulting in the scheme reducing its upfront embodied carbon intensity down to 770kgCO₂/m² compared with over 1100kgCO₂/m² for a typical development of this type.

The jewel in the scheme's crown will be the living façade that has been designed to remove air pollutants including carbon, reduce urban temperatures offering thermal benefits to occupiers, and delivering a net gain in the biodiversity of the area, while providing high-quality green spaces. Alongside this, the façade has a range of health benefits, with the scheme designed to enhance occupier health, wellbeing, productivity and will embrace the WELL Building Standard principles. The development is also a LETI pioneer project and is on target to achieve a BREEAM Outstanding rating.

Phil Marsden, projects director at The English Cities Fund, said: "To receive the news that we've been given approval to bring what will be an iconic scheme forward is a strong endorsement of our commitment to building back better, in a bid to deliver real environmental and social outputs to benefit our communities.

"Despite the unprecedented times we find ourselves in, we're still seeing a demand for high-quality office space, that not only provides an agile environment in which to work from that promotes colleague wellbeing, but also spaces that're climate resilient and adaptable to our changing world.

"We're excited to add another building to the ever-expanding Salford skyline, while also bringing a new offering to the city. The wider New Bailey development is truly mixed-use, and our aim is to continue to drive opportunity, growth and prosperity for all."

John Alker, director of policy and places at the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC), said: "It is great to see that the ambitious New Bailey project is planning to achieve UKGBC's office performance targets and deliver a building that will be net zero in operation. We applaud the project team, who have clearly taken a holistic approach to sustainability, with whole life carbon being considered alongside how the development can support the health and wellbeing of people and the nature and biodiversity of the surrounding area."

Salford city mayor, Paul Dennett, said: "It is fantastic news that this innovative scheme has been approved at Planning Panel as it will create jobs, growth and new opportunities for local people. It is so important that fossil free buildings schemes like this one are replicated across the city and is a great step forward in realising our longer-term plans to be a carbon neutral city by 2038."

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 joint venture partnership is currently delivering some of the most complex and most successful urban regeneration projects across the UK. Following the fund's expansion in 2018, it continues to take on large-scale, challenging sites and create inspiring new places.

Building on the fund's success at Salford Central, it was named earlier in the year 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.

Planning consultant - Avison Young | Sustainability consultant - Cundalls | Architect - Make | Engineer - Woolgar Hunter | MEP - Atelier 10 | Quantity surveyor - RPS | Contract administrator - Chroma | Building control - Ball & Berry | Façade engineering consultant - Wintech | Fire engineering consultant - OFR | Landscape architect - Re-form | Highways consultant - WSP