

ORBIT INNOVATION CENTRE, MERTHYR TYDFIL



LOCATION: MERTHYR TYDFIL

CLIENT: MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

VALUE: £4.5M

SIZE: 3000M²

COMPLETION: 2008

SERVICE: ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE, INTERIOR DESIGN

SECTOR: COMMERCIAL

CONTRACTOR: WILLMOTT DIXON

LANDSCAPE: AUSTIN-SMITH:LORD

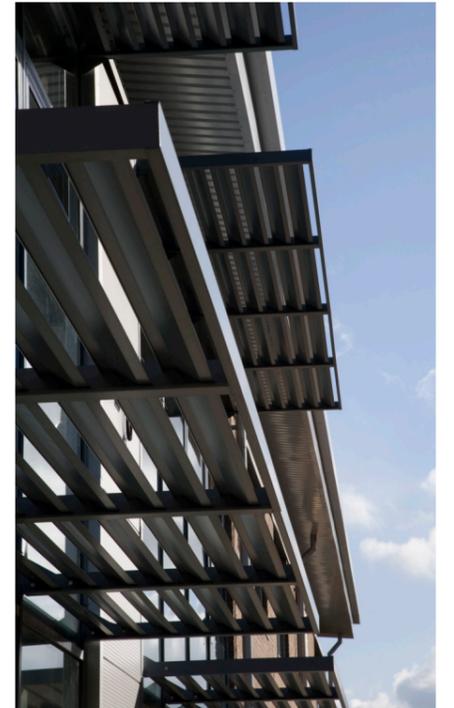
STRUCTURES: JUBB

SERVICES: WILLMOTT DIXON

COST CONSULTANT: WILLMOTT DIXON

The £4.5 million Orbit Innovation Centre, for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, provides a focus for enterprise facilities for the County Borough. The building provides training and skills development facilities; Managed Workspace; a Business Support Centre; Anchor Tenant Units; and ancillary facilities including large meeting rooms and kitchen facilities.

The building is located on the site adjacent the new Welsh Government Building at Rhyd Y Car and is highly prominent on the approach to the town from the A470. The building seeks to embrace the existing site, stand with its own identity, and yet compliment the impressive Welsh Assembly Government regional office building nearby.



The form of the building derives from the long sheds which were used as workhouses at the nearby Cyfarthfa Ironworks. The concept takes the idea of the long shed plan and splits it to form the access to the heart of the building and to create a pair of 15m deep office plates which can be naturally ventilated.

The use of brick for elements of the façade was centred on the idea of echoing the traditional brick used on the historic buildings in Merthyr, associated with the Iron and later, Steelworks buildings. The choice of brick colour and type has again followed this line of thinking, reflected in the selection of an industrial red/blue brick feel.

The new Innovation Centre is, however, designed to be a contemporary office building with landmark quality. To compliment and contrast with the tactile industrial red/blue brick facades, grey micro rib composite metal aluminium cladding is used which has a sophisticated and corporate aesthetic.

The cladding incorporates Eco-friendly insulation which achieves high ratings for BREEAM and for Sustainability. The elevations also incorporate areas of horizontal cedar timber cladding. These zones of timber help to identify the South and North Entrances and reflect a green agenda stressed by the Client throughout the project.

The design has been assessed as BREEAM 'Very Good' and includes innovations such as insulation that is 25% more efficient than standard, all round, with zero ozone depletion potential, use of solar panels to contribute free water heating for the building, water use is kept to a minimum, with rainwater harvested for toilets, and energy is managed using sensors to shut off lights when no one is present.

Completed in November 2008, the project was delivered on time and on budget through a design and build procurement process.