



Government
Property
Agency

23 Stephenson Street

Regenerating disused retail and commercial space



The Government Property Agency's Birmingham Hub was refurbished from disused retail space to create modern, digitally-connected and inclusive workspaces to support 1,700 civil servants from 20 government bodies.

It welcomed its first occupants through a phased induction from July 2021, and was officially opened in July 2022. The Hub is saving more than £2 million per year through estate rationalisation.

The Government Hub in Birmingham's city centre - at 23 Stephenson Street - is part of the Government Hubs Programme which exists to create a portfolio of regional office buildings for multi-departmental use. The programme is rationalising the government office estate across the UK to realise greater efficiencies and reduce carbon emissions.

The Hub sits on the site of the old Theatre Royal which was demolished in the 1950's. A then new mixed-use retail and commercial building was developed with Woolworths taking home across the ground floor.

The GPA identified the opportunity to refurbish the (what was vacant) 1950's building to create a new Government Hub that would provide smarter working facilities to civil servants. It also identified the building as its new headquarters.



1950's modernisation

Refurbishing the existing 1950's building came with unique challenges. Contemporary methods and standards were to be applied to a structure that wasn't designed for modern day use. This included design solutions around accessibility, BREEAM sustainability, and innovative approaches to working within a constrained building.

Safety and security enhancements also required innovative solutions. Elements of the building structure were enhanced and repaired, which improved the overall fire safety of the building and improved occupant evacuation times.

The Covid-19 pandemic added a unique set of challenges with social distancing requirements. But leveraging its networks across government, the GPA implemented strict ways of working to ensure safety across the site. And, in collaboration with its delivery partners, it kept the project on track and ensured more than 100 people remained employed.

Enabling estate rationalisation

23 Stephenson Street was officially opened in July 2022 by Minister Jacob Rees-Mogg. Eight silo, inefficient government office buildings were closed as civil servants relocated to the new Hub. This is saving an estimated £2 million per year in operating costs, returning money to the public purse.

More than 1,700 civil servants from across 20 government departments now work from the Hub, designed to the Government Workplace Design Guide standards*. Modern, digitally-connected, flexible and inclusive work spaces are nurturing greater productivity, creating cost efficiencies and enhancing carbon reduction.



Rated best UK public sector workplace experience

In March 2023, the GPA achieved Leesman+ certification for its Birmingham Hub. The score places the Hub in the top spot for employee workplace experience in the UK's public sector.

Leesman+ is a globally recognised certification that is awarded to top-tier workplaces following rigorous surveying, analysis and testing. Leesman+ certified buildings create an elevated benchmark, and provide valuable insights into the quality of features, services and infrastructure that matter the most to the people who use the building.

Only 202 buildings have successfully achieved the certification, placing the GPA's Birmingham building on Stephenson Street in the top 2% of global workplaces.

*Download your copy of the workplace design guide by searching "Government Workplace Design Guide" on www.gov.uk

