





medical marvel

‘This building has already contributed – it’s already helped to change the way we are as a company. There’s a new connectivity, more openness and greater calmness. In essence it’s a platform for the company we have become and it’s enabling us to push on to the next level.’

Roche Diagnostics’ Bruce News’ description of the cultural, communication and commercial benefits of the new UK head office is absolutely spot on. At the most simple level this is a fast track fit-out that delivers both tangible and feelgood benefits. Yet way beyond the basics of re-housing a fast growing organisation in double quick time, we are focussing on an interiors project that scores heavily in key strategic areas such as branding, marketing, human resources and the environment.

In many ways, Roche Diagnostics’ new Burgess Hill head office is a physical version of how this world leading company sees itself, ▶▶▶▶



▶▶▶▶and more importantly how that vision is projected internally and externally. Branding, marketing and personnel issues are vital to a technically advanced global player. Roche sells complex, premium healthcare solutions and employs similarly qualified people. What the building does so impressively is to project the brand's core

strengths and values: imagination, detail, calm professionalism and solidity.

We met up with Bruce Newns, the company's Head of Procurement and Facilities, and asked for a little of the background to the story.

'We had been in Lewes since 1975, on a converted brewery site. In fact we had

developed the site piecemeal around ourselves, complete with Portakabins, offices and warehousing until we reached capacity of about 150 staff. We had to move because the company had doubled in size in five years – but we also knew that because of our requirement to provide our customers with plenty of training, our premises were no longer good enough. We had looked at a few options and were getting close to running out of time. For example, our original plan to stay in Lewes was problematic due to planning constraints, and another site in Brighton found us gazumped well into the process. David Mackie at The Interiors Group, who had been working with us during the process, identified a rather dilapidated pair of buildings in Burgess Hill which, with a little lateral thinking, seemed to offer a solution. The developer had intended to demolish the buildings to create a retail business park, but after looking at the possibilities The Interiors Group came up with a scheme by which the two blocks could be linked by a new glazed atrium, creating a sense of space, light and community. We replaced the old cladding and effectively created a remodelled and recycled building. I should▶▶▶▶▶



case study



►►► say that time was of the essence: not only were the principles of how to re-use the building worked out in a day, but once the developer had delivered the shell and core, David's team delivered the finished building in 20 weeks.'

It seemed appropriate to change tack to discuss Roche's business, and specifically the added value of the building's design.

'Roche is the world leader in diagnostics, based in Basle with about 80,000 staff worldwide. Here in the UK we're a sales and marketing organisation with our medical diagnostics portfolio spanning areas from blood testing analysis equipment to monitoring devices of various types. We've got about 200 staff here, with another 200 field based sales people and engineers. While our design is unique in terms of Roche global standards, our approach had the full interest and backing of our Corporate Estates Group, who recognised that we had been in a 1970's building which didn't reflect our brand or our position as a market leader. This office is designed to reflect both those things as well as inspiring our people at work and, of course, aid in our efforts to recruit high calibre, skilled staff.

'We employ marketing people and technical people in a large catchment area with plenty of competition for good staff – this building is important in projecting who we are and what we do. Furthermore, a major element of this site is our training facilities. Our training areas replicate hospital environments, and we have a lot of customers and user groups coming in – the detail has to be absolutely right.'

The scope of Interiors Group's design and build work is far-reaching and notable for an unusual level of detail. For example, the scheme includes the provision of a site generator and control systems and a stand-alone environment for the computer room with Inergen fire suppression. Beyond that there are also comprehensive security and access control systems including a newly built security lodge, de-ionised water systems and services for the demonstration laboratories, a full service kitchen environment, shower and changing facilities for the gymnasium and a comprehensive range of integrated audio-visual solutions.

Despite this impressive array, it is also fair to say that if this case study's sole focus was the interior design we would have more than enough to dwell on. Working closely with Dutch interior designer Bart Vos – who sourced some intriguing pieces to provide a warm yet contemporary domestic ►►►►►





►►►► **ambience** in key common areas – Interiors Group’s impressive scheme oozes quality and detail. Intense evaluation of performance and value has resulted in an eclectic mix of elements that simply impress. A tour of the building with David Mackie reveals an extraordinary level of detailing – for example a simple device to prevent the Humanscale monitor arms touching the low level screens on the Tangent workstations. The Tangent bench desks’ impressive cable management, the sheer quality and value of the Sagal task chairs and clean lines of the Bene furniture and storage all offer sleek, well executed design. Elegantly and subtly resolved

manifestations and signage underscore the refinement apparent throughout the scheme. Other notable elements include Christy Carpets’ flooring in the office areas, specialist lighting from Modular and the mobile furniture in the staff breakout area.

‘Forward thinking’ is a good way to describe Roche Diagnostics – and this is a building that epitomises that expression. Hard headed too – we were preparing to take our leave when we were introduced to Finance Director Geoff Twist, who was happy to confirm some tangible benefits of the move. ‘We didn’t lose a single member of staff because of our move 14 miles from Lewes – and the new environment has been

a positive force in improving our staff retention levels, which is especially important as have doubled in size in the last five years!’

‘Everyone’s impressed,’ confirms Bruce Newns. ‘We’ve had a great deal of positive feedback from our customers and staff and invariably the comment is that our new HQ is up there with the best, if not the best.’ ●

essential ingredients

- Client:** • Roche Diagnostics
- Design & Delivery:** • The Interiors Group
01932 779999
- Concept Design Partner:** • Vos Interieur BV
0031 505 244244
- Mechanical Services:** • ABS London
020 7613 1868
- Systems Furniture:** • Tangent
0870 990 4150
- Task Seating:** • The Sagal Group
020 7729 7377
- Office Furniture / Storage:** • Bene
020 7689 1234
- Lighting:** • Modular Lighting
020 7681 9943
- Loose Furniture Package:** • Vos Interieur BV
0031 505 244244

