





# laud of the wings

We do like visiting airports. We say this with our *Mix* journalists hats firmly removed – until now that is. Professional hats are back on.

**y**ou see, while everything about the modern major airport can transform us into small children, with large eyes full of wonder, we have, in the past, ventured beyond the public façade of duty free offers, the roar of Rolls Royce engines on a Boeing that, no matter how many times its explained to us, leaves us confused and in awe as it sublimely takes to the skies, the friendly bars that open before the milkman's been and the incredible variety of nationalities and creeds that surround us.





▶▶▶▶▶ Now we know that's a long sentence, well that's the breathless, non-stop experience the airport offers us. But then there's the areas the public doesn't get to see. We have visited a couple of office spaces within airports and, to be honest, we've seen very little to enthuse over.

Today, however, we have a feeling that this may well be about to change. We've

come to Gatwick – our favourite big British airport – to take a look at a major office refurbishment programme. Then we might go and look at some planes too!

Area Sq was appointed to undertake BAA Gatwick's 50,000 sq ft office space at South Terminal, Gatwick. The firm's Amanda Godwin-Jones tells us that this was not the first project Area Sq has worked on

with BAA. 'This was our second project together. We previously decanted the staff out of the South Roof Office Building – which had now been re-branded and called Destinations – into Ashdown House and various offices around the Gatwick perimeter. Ashdown House used to be the staff canteen here, so it was full of equipment and huge air handling units. It was not such a great space for an office, but the refurbishment project went really well. We were even given an internal award for the work. We have a great relationship from that.

'The team at Gatwick South wanted to transform their building, which was a little tired and dated, into a flowing, contemporary space. This meant remodelling the internal space entirely. The idea here was to bring all these people together. We could see how things would work simply by opening the doors up and transforming cellular offices into an open plan working space.

'There were a number of business drivers behind the project. The internal building definitely needed refreshing and the character being brought out. Each BAA airport has its own unique character and ▶▶▶▶▶







▶▶▶▶ minimised their carbon footprint.

Everything we picked had to be sanitised and checked. We had to go through an exercise to ensure that every single item fulfilled their brief – we had to change every window throughout the entire building for example, to comply with their environmental policy. This slowed the process a little, but actually was the right way to do things.’

The 46-week programme encompassed the complete strip-out of existing services and structures, the installation of new building services and, in addition to this, a full architectural package was undertaken.

Amanda continues by revealing that the project coincided with a re-branding programme at Gatwick South. ‘This is now called Destinations and basically the entire management of Gatwick Airport is now contained in one building. They didn’t have that before. Even before we originally decanted them, they were spread out across the airport.’

Areas Sq has introduced an incredibly fresh, contemporary scheme throughout the fifth floor reception space – together with the use of brilliant graphics, high quality

finishes and materials such as polycarbonate – and on to the main working areas, which cover floors six, seven and eight. These three open plan floors feature their own unique colour scheme, different light fittings and levels and different floorcoverings, providing gently changing working atmospheres.

The overall facility now features a contemporary open plan working environment, together with flexible meeting spaces, hot-desking zones, breakout areas and quiet rooms.

Above this we find, not surprisingly, the 9th floor, which benefits from incredible views over the airport – indeed this impressive new meeting room suite was once the airport viewing tower and still features the original sloping window design.

Emma Rees, Head of Property at BAA Gatwick says of the decision to work with Areas Sq on the project: ‘We wanted to investigate cost-effective ways to achieve this project and the Design and Build solution seemed ideal. The original building has served the airport for many decades and was in need of updating to deliver a contemporary working environment able to support a modern day work force.’

While we’re on the 9th floor we can’t help but admire the stunning views across Gatwick. Maybe we could stay and discuss the project for a little longer...ooh, is that a 737? ●

## essential ingredients

- Client: • BAA
- Design & Planning: • Area Sq  
020 7647 5200
- Systems Furniture: • Kinnarps  
01753 681860
- Seating: • Orangebox  
020 7837 9922  
Vitra  
020 7608 6200
- Partitioning: • Komfort  
01293 592500
- Flooring: • Milliken  
020 7336 7290
- Ceilings: • Armstrong  
0800 371849